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...es For Lay People

The Christian Ministry and Social Problems

Charles D. Williams

1. Sociology (Christian).
Working classes and the Church.

Church Principles for Lay People

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
AND
SOCIAL PROBLEMS

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THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
AND
SOCIAL PROBLEMS

BY
CHARLES D. WILLIAMS
BISHOP OF MICHIGAN
Author of "A Valid Christianity
for Today," etc.

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TO

WALTER RAUSCHENBUSCH

A modern prophet of "The Kingdom of God," this little volume is offered as a slight tribute of admiration by one who has found in the writings of that man of God a chief source of inspiration in preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom

PREFACE

This little volume should be introduced by an apology rather than by a preface. The writer realises that it is the height of presumption for him to enter a field already occupied by such giants as Rauschenbusch and others of like intellectual and spiritual stature. The excuse for doing so is twofold:

First, the request of a friend and of the publishers. Upon them must rest some of the responsibility for this venture.

And second, the hope that repeated blows may heat the cold iron of the Church's conscience on this vital matter and that perhaps even this slight effort may contribute somewhat to that desired result.

The pronoun of the first person has been used freely and frankly throughout the book. It is hoped that it will be taken, not as a mark of egotism, but as quite the opposite. The writer lays no claim to the authority of any considerable learning or research in this field. He simply utters *personal convictions,* born of a deep interest in the subject and of some experience acquired in a ministry of over thirty years, throughout which he has tried to

preach the social interpretation of the Gospel along the lines sketched in this book. He would have his utterances taken and assayed simply as such personal convictions. The "ego" is merely a disclaimer of any higher authority. With St. Paul, the writer would assert, "So say I, not the Lord," though he might feel in his heart, "I think that I also have the spirit of God."

The plan of the book, it is hoped, is so simple as to be evident to the most casual reader.

In the first chapter the attempt is made to lay down the ground of the whole subject,— the new social conscience so characteristic of our age, with its effects on politics, legislation and industry and also on the interpretation and application of religion.

In the second chapter is suggested the concern of the minister of religion with the moral implications of the fundamental economic problem which underlies the social problem, that is, the distribution of wealth.

The third chapter endeavours to state more definitely what that concern is, viz.: justice rather than charity.

The fourth chapter tries to draw the boundary lines between the sphere of the social reformer, whose business is chiefly with the fabric of society, with economic and social mechanics — and the sphere of the prophet and preacher of everlasting righteousness whose concern is with the spirit of society, with moral and spiritual dynamics.

PREFACE

The last chapter suggests a possible practical programme for such as may be moved to preach and apply the "gospel of the Kingdom."

There are many other "personal convictions" which clamour for utterance in this volume, but the limitations of space imposed by inexorable publishers forbid. The writer feels, more deeply than any possible critic can, the incompleteness of the matter and the inadequacy of the treatment thereof in the book. But such as it is, he sends it forth with the modest hope that in an occasional instance it may serve as a slight irritant, a kind of mild Spanish-fly blister, to the somewhat torpid social conscience of the average minister of the Church.

CHARLES D. WILLIAMS.

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY
AND
SOCIAL PROBLEMS

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS

CHAPTER I

THE NEW SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

THIS is the age of the "Social Problem." It meets us everywhere. We can not dodge it. It permeates the very air we breathe.

It fairly possesses our current literature. The press teems with books, dealing more or less directly with it. It pervades our periodicals. It creeps into the columns of staid theological and philosophical reviews like the *Hibbert Journal* and even into the pages of technical publications and trade-papers. It shouts at us in the editorials of the daily newspaper. If we pick up an ostensibly "light novel" for summer reading, the plot is sure to turn upon some aspect of this inevitable and ubiquitous subject. If we go to the theatre, it leaps upon us from the stage in the form of the "problem-play." It thunders through the halls of Congress and screams at us from the "stump." Since the advent and demise of the "Progressive

Party," it is becoming more and more the foundation of political platforms. Two men can scarcely meet on the street to-day and start a conversation about so innocent a subject as the weather without arriving finally at a discussion of some one of the innumerable phases of the "Social Problem." And if the harassed soul seek that last haven of peace, where the weary mind may presumably bathe itself in the Lethal waters of abstract theology and "other-worldly" religion and forget the turmoil and strife of "this present age," i. e., if he goes to church,— his coveted rest is apt to be broken by a sermon on some aspect of "social righteousness."

The "Social Problem" seems to have become an "idee fixée" in the modern mind. The age seems to have become hypnotised by this one absorbing subject.

Why is it so?

The reason, as it seems to me, is that we have been passing through a period of transition. Society, or at least our conception of society, has "effected a change of base," to use a military phrase. It has passed over from an individualistic or atomic basis to an organic basis.

The modern age may be said roughly to have begun with that great movement of thought in the fifteenth and following centuries which had so many and such varied forms. On its intellectual side we call it the Renaissance. In its religious

aspect it is the Reformation. And it finally issued in the political revolutions of the seventeenth century in England and of the eighteenth in America and France. But, whatever form that movement took, it emphasised persistently and consistently the individual.

It has been said that Jesus first discovered the individual, previously absorbed alike in the Hebrew theocracy and in the Greek and Roman democracies, aristocracies and imperialisms. He was quickly resubmerged in the ecclesiastical organisation of society called the Church and the civil organisation called the state. This great movement rediscovered Him, set Him in the forefront of its regard and interpreted religion and politics alike in terms of the individual. On its intellectual side as the renaissance, it stood for the freedom of the mind, the right of the individual to think for himself. On its religious side as the reformation, it insisted on the liberty of conscience, the right of the individual to believe as he thought, perhaps even as he chose. In its political and economic issues, it emphasised the freedom of political action, and the right of the individual to do as he willed with his business.

Everywhere and always it was the individual and his rights that were stressed.

The natural result was an individualistic, even atomistic, interpretation and conception of society. Perhaps the best expression of that interpretation is Rousseau's theory of the "social contract." As I

understand it, that theory runs somewhat like this:

The final and constituting unit of all society is the individual. Each individual comes into existence at birth with a full stock and equipment of ready-made inherent and inalienable "natural rights." The paramount end or aim of his life is to defend, maintain and establish those rights; self-expression and self-realisation, these are the very purpose of existence. But primitive man soon found that he could not in isolation achieve that end of existence. Just as the solitary animal feels the need of the herd for self-protection, so the isolated individual felt the need of aggregation with others for his own self-realisation. And so these isolated individuals said one to another, "Go to, we will make the thing that shall be called society." And it was made on this fashion. Each constituent individual agreed to surrender just so much of his "ready-made, inherent and inalienable natural rights" as was necessary to glue the fabric of society together,— society agreeing on its side to defend and protect the individual in the remainder of his rights. These were the two sides of the contract on the part of the individual and on the part of society. And so society came into being, — an artificial, man-made creation, individualistic and atomic in its composition,— an aggregation, not an organism,— a herd, not a body politic or social, — a sand-heap, each grain separate and distinct, piled together for the sole benefit of the mass to the grain.

That conception of society, or something very like it, has hitherto largely ruled our thought and action in politics, law, business, industry and religion, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, particularly among Anglo-Saxons and especially in America.

For example, we Americans, according to some of our keen foreign critics, are afflicted with the disease of " state-blindness." To us the state exists, not for the organisation of the commonweal, but to back up the individual, particularly the forceful and aggressive individual, in his rights to " life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," which last phrase is apt to mean to the typical American, as Mr. Alton B. Parker once remarked, " the pursuit of wealth." The one test of an administration is its effect on the stock-market and of a Congress its effect on business. The wisdom and beneficence, the justice and necessity of the regulations and reforms, enacted by the one and enforced by the other, are of little consideration in comparison with this test of commercial prosperity and that generally a lop-sided prosperity. Government in all its branches, executive, from the President of the United States to the President of the hamlet, legislative, from the national Congress to the village council, and judicial, from the Supreme Court to the justice of the peace,— all government exists, not to maintain general social equity and well being, but to secure the rights of the individual.

Read over our " Declaration of Independence " or

any of our early fundamental state documents and you will find them saturated with the political ideas of the French Revolution and the eighteenth century philosophy. They have much to say about the "inalienable natural rights" of the individual, little about his social responsibilities and obligations. The individual is held so close to the eye that he hides from view the commonweal.

Our legislation has hitherto been chiefly negative and defensive, concerned almost entirely with protecting the rights, especially the property rights, of the individual. It has not been positive, socially constructive and architectonic. That is, it has been mostly concerned with defining and defending the rights of the individual, little with defining and enforcing his social duties and responsibilities, and still less with regulating those rights with a view to common welfare or building up the fabric and organisation of the general social body.

Business and industry have been left to the anarchistic rule of "laissez-faire," the "let-alone" policy. Government must be limited to police-powers and functions only in its relation to business: that is, it may restrain flagrant violations of individual rights but it must not go further and attempt to regulate or organise business or industry with a view to their general effect upon society. The dynamic of commerce and industry has been almost universally recognised as individual greed, the desire for profit, the pursuit of self-interest, perhaps a more and

more enlightened self-interest, but still self-interest after all, not the will to serve society. Out of the clash of these unregulated and largely unrestrained individual greeds and enlightened self-interests, it was optimistically hoped would be evolved or hammered out somehow a rude and rough justice. But the rudeness and roughness of the result have been more apparent than the justice thereof. The watch word of our business and commerce has been " Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost."

The same individualistic and atomic conception of society has permeated our popular religions. It has been the formative and constituting element in our common interpretation of religion, its nature, purposes and applications. Protestantism, the religion of the Reformation, has been almost purely individualistic and atomic.

First it lost almost entirely the conception of the Church as the body of Christ in the world and concerned itself exclusively with the relations between the individual soul and God. And consequently while it has always tremendously stimulated and freed the moral energies and initiative of individuals, it has ever been a divisive and disintegrating element in society, crumbling itself into ever multiplying fragments and setting in rival camps over against each other the redeeming and regenerating forces of society. It has largely absorbed these forces in sectarian differences and jealousies and exhausted them in denominational maintenance and propaganda,

rather than applied them to the service of the commonweal and the regeneration of society.

But more serious than this has been the social failure of Protestantism. It has largely lost the vision of the Kingdom of God or Kingdom of Heaven on earth which was ever the commanding and paramount ideal of Jesus. For while it is undeniable that Jesus " discovered the individual " and dealt directly with him, yet it is also evident that the supreme and final vision of all His seeing was far larger and wider than the individual. The phrase continually on His lips, the theme of all His teaching, is the Kingdom of God or the Kingdom of Heaven *upon earth*. And no one who reads the Gospels attentively can doubt that " the Kingdom " was to Him a social ideal in this present world. It included " the kingdom within," the kingdom in the individual soul wherein the anarchy of warring impulses, lusts and passions has been reduced to order by the love of God and obedience to His will,— the kingdom " which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." That is its constituent element, its formative unit. But the Kingdom is more and bigger than that.

It is more than the Church, the ecclesiastical organisation. At its best the Church is but the microcosm, the working-model of the kingdom and the tool for its up-building.

Evidently according to Jesus' expectation the kingdom is to be universal, world-wide and age-long. It

is to include, not simply elect and select individuals, but "all nations" when they shall have been "discipled" with His discipline. The kingdom is nought less than, as Bishop Gore has so well defined it, "all human society regenerated until it shall be according to the Will of God." Or as the Lord's prayer more tersely and concretely expresses it, "Thy kingdom come," that is, "Thy will be done *on earth* as it is in Heaven." For the kingdom of God is nothing less than the universal obedience to the will of God. It is "the new heaven *and the new earth* wherein dwelleth righteousness." It is "the universal brotherhood of men under the all-inclusive Fatherhood of God."

Now Protestantism, at least the current Protestantism of our day in America, has lost that vision. It has substituted for "the kingdom of God" or the "kingdom of heaven on earth" the "saving of souls" as the paramount end and aim of the Christian religion. That phrase, "the saving of souls," may be interpreted in one of two ways; the old-fashioned eschatological way, which posits the center of gravity of religion in another world or the modern ethical way which emphasises the personal character of the individual as the essential object of salvation.

Still in either interpretation, Protestantism is purely individualistic. It is concerned exclusively with the individual soul. When it has given that soul assurance of escape from hell-fire and admission

to eternal bliss, or when it has built up that soul unto "the perfect manhood, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," its mission is ended. There is nothing more for it to do. Its bearing upon society and its mission to society are indirect. It is to develop, equip and contribute regenerated individuals who may possibly reform an evil order, but with that evil order itself, with society as such, it has no concern whatsoever. Out of this purely individualistic interpretation of religion flow many consequences.

There is that most pernicious of heresies, the false distinction between the sacred and the secular. Certain highly technical concerns and practices, pieties and proprieties are alone religious. All the rest of life is secular.

There results from this technicalising of religion into specialised acts and interests, this false distinction between the religious and the secular, a moral dichotomy that runs all through life. Life is divided into two separate spheres with no communication between them. A double standard is established. In the one sphere,— the religious,— the law of Christ may run. That is His realm, where He is the acknowledged sovereign. That perhaps, is the "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of Heaven" on earth. In the other, the law of this world is supreme, the commercial code in business, established custom in industry, the "rules of the game" in politics, and good form in society. There can be no

"confusion of attributes" of "transvaluation of values" between the two. Religion and politics, religion and business, religion and society will not mix any more than oil and water. Rather like nitrogen and glycerine, when mixed, they produce a highly dangerous social explosive. Therefore they must be kept in strictly isolated compartments. The "golden rule" will not work in commerce or industry. The iron law of business alone is practicable there. It is not "do unto others as ye would they should do unto you" but "do the other fellow before he does you." The sermon on the mount, practically applied, would wreck society. Therefore keep it for sermons and offertory anthems on a Sunday. But don't let it leak over into Monday.

Sincere and earnest men, religious and pious men, are everywhere living their lives more or less unconsciously by this double standard. They change their codes as they do their clothes, frock-coat and white tie for Sunday, sack-coat and four-in-hand for Monday: the principles of Christ for the Church, the home, the family and immediately personal relations; the precepts of a hard-hearted and hard-headed worldly wisdom for the market and the office. Life is lived in what the grammarians call "a squinting construction," with an eye each to two contrary principles. The Kingdom of God is a corporation with strictly limited liabilities. The result is a disease of double vision which results often in moral and spiritual blindness. For "if thine eye be single,

thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness."

That is the final result upon the individual of this purely individualistic religion, if consistently carried out to its logical issue. But, thank God, there is a saving grace of irrationality and illogicalness inherent in human nature!

But worst of all, this individualistic interpretation of religion has made the Church indifferent, if not blind, to the larger interpretations and issues of her Gospel. By limiting herself to the technically "religious" sphere, she has voluntarily surrendered to the "world, the flesh and the devil" the major part of the kingdom of her Lord. She has renounced His sovereignty over His rightful realm. And the issue is inevitable. Christ is a jealous Master. He will be King of all or not at all. You can not permanently maintain a double standard either in currency or morals. In the end the baser standard will drive out the higher.

Such are some of the results of the purely individualistic interpretation of religion, so characteristic of Protestantism since the Reformation.

But we are rapidly "changing all that." As I said in the beginning of this chapter, we are passing through an age of transition. We are effecting a change of base in our conception of society. We are passing from the individualistic or atomic con-

ception to the organic. Consequently there are developing rapidly among us first, a new social consciousness, a new sense of unity and solidarity between individuals, classes and even nations; and second, a new social conscience. These again are issuing in new interpretations and applications of fundamental principles in politics, business, industry and religion.

Perhaps this change in our thinking has come about largely under pressure, the pressure of the new economic and industrial organisation of the nineteenth century and the rapid shrinking and unification of the world during that century through the development of transportation and intercommunication by steam and electricity.

There is a greater difference between the world of the twentieth century and the world of the eighteenth than there is between the world of the eighteenth and that of the first.

The eighteenth century was naturally individualistic. Communication and transportation were difficult. Industry was handicraft. Nations and communities were isolated from each other, independent and self-centered. Each thought for itself and acted for itself and largely supported itself. It was natural that such an age should think in small terms. It was natural that it should conceive of society as individualistic and even atomic.

To-day the whole world thinks together, feels together and acts together as never before. With the

change from handicraft to machine manufacture, with the ever minuter divisions of labour and larger organisation of industry, with the ever quickening means of communication and transportation, all walls of isolation, independence and self-sufficiency are broken down and the whole world is being welded into a new unity. Each nation in the world, each class in society, each community in the nation and each individual in the community is forced to realise a necessary dependence upon every other.

The organic conception of society becomes inevitable. It is a body, not a heap of sand. We are realising that instead of an artificial creation, made by social contract between individuals, it is natural growth and therefore a Divine creation. Its constituting unit is not the individual but at least the family, perhaps the tribe and some are saying, the nation,— possibly humanity itself. Instead of the individual making society by social contract, society makes the individual by social pressure. It was there before we came. We were born into it. A nexus of social influences surrounds us at birth and shapes our forming life. We are poured into matrices and moulds of family habits and tradition, social customs, industrial and commercial orders, national "kulturs," and we are shaped and fixed accordingly.

St. Paul's figure of the Church as the body of Christ or the "grand man" expresses most closely the growing modern conception of society. We are all "members one of another," vitally one in a com-

mon living organism, not grains in a heap or even cogs in a machine.

There is a mutual interdependence among the members of the body. That sense of mutual interdependence is the very spirit of modern democracy, the prevailing and conquering tendency of the age. It abolishes all old and artificial aristocracies. The aristocracy of birth and lineage is practically gone. The aristocracy of possession and privilege is going. The aristocracy of efficiency and worth in the common service of the body alone can finally endure.

There can be no despair of low position in the body. There can be no arrogance of high position. "The ear can not say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body. Nor can the head say to the feet, I have no need of you." "Nay, much rather those members of the body which seem to be more feeble, are the more necessary. And those parts of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon them we bestow the more abundant honour."

That is the mind of modern democracy, inspired by the new social consciousness which arises out of our new modern economic and industrial organisation. Through it "God is tempering the body together, giving more abundant honour to that part which lacked, that there should be no more schism in the body but that the members should have the same care one of another."

Yes, the aristocracy of worth and efficiency in the common life, of social serviceableness, this is the only

aristocracy that can live with the new social consciousness of the day and the new spirit of democracy that is inspired thereby. We can get along, on a pinch, without our parasites, whether they be the tramps and hoboes of the road or the idlers of the drawing-rooms and clubs. Therefore upon them we shall bestow the less abundant honour until we drive them out of society.

But the actual producers, whether they be horny-handed manual workers or sinewy-brained inventors and captains of industry, upon these we shall bestow the more abundant honour.

And out of this new social *consciousness* arises a new social *sympathy*. There runs throughout this social body a common sympathetic nervous system, so that "whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it." Nothing is more strikingly characteristic of our age than this new social sympathy. Things and conditions, once accepted as inevitable decrees of fate or inscrutable dispensations of Providence, are now recognised as intolerable and remediable evils which can and must be abolished by the better adjustment of society. Even poverty, with all its attendant evils, is outlawed and doomed. It is not simply the social discontent of the disinherited, the submerged, of which I speak, but still more striking is the social discontent of the privileged, even of those who are yet apparently secure in the possession of their privileges. More and more the wealthy, the powerful, the aristocratic, the cul-

tured, are saying with Buddha, " I can not enter into my heaven while one soul remains outside." " I can not enjoy my privileges, while those same privileges are denied to any other on equal terms."

And out of this new social consciousness, manifesting itself in this sense of mutual interdependence and social sympathy, is being found a new *social conscience.*

The accent and emphasis of common thought are passing everywhere from the rights of the individual to his social responsibilities. Indeed we are no longer sure that there are any " inherent rights " of the individual which can stand alone. Each such alleged right is but the obverse side of the coin whose reverse is a corresponding social obligation or responsibility. As one has well said, " individual rights and social obligations are like the two coupons of a railroad ticket and upon each is written ' not good if detached.' " To illustrate, my arm is a member of my body. As such it has its " inherent and inalienable natural right " to its due share in the common nourishment and circulation of the body. But that right will be recognised by the body only so long as the arm functions as a member of that body, only so long as it serves the common life. If it be exercised, it will receive its share in increasing measure according to the service it performs. If it refuse to serve, if it be tied by my side, its supply will be promptly diminished and finally cut off. The arm becomes atrophied; that is, it is no longer recognised as a member of the body. It has been outlawed and

expelled therefrom. We are going to do that in society presently. The apostolic maxim, "if a man will not work, neither shall he eat" has long been applied to the beggar at the back-door. We are going to apply it presently to the lounger in the front drawing-room.

For instance, let us apply this new doctrine to that most sacred and sacrosanct of all rights among Anglo-Saxons, especially among the American variety, the right of private property. Hitherto it has been the most arrogant of all rights. Its one sufficient reply to all critics has been "What is mine, is mine. It is nobody's business how I got it. Possession is nine points of the law (and with most Americans and Anglo-Saxons generally it is ten points plus, at least it has been until recently). And it is nobody's business how I spend it or use it. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?"

But the new social conscience is beginning to question this curt and crass defence of "private property." It is beginning to analyse and test this most sacrosanct of all "inherent and inalienable natural rights." There has been a marked change of attitude in the popular mind towards men of large wealth. Hitherto the common crowd has looked up to them with silent and submissive admiration, if not adulation. They have been regarded simply as the prize-winners in the common scramble and gamble in which we were all engaged.

But now public opinion is beginning to look at them with suspicion and inquiry. In that delightful essay entitled "The Spirit of Christmas and the Spirit of Democracy," Samuel McChord Crothers relates a conversation between a modern Scrooge and a modern interlocutor. Scrooge is perplexed. "When I drove over to Camden town on that Christmas morning years ago and distributed my cab-full of chickens, geese and turkeys, I was met everywhere with caps deferentially doffed and fervent 'thank'ee sirs' and 'God bless 'ee sirs.' But to-day, they take my turkeys, to be sure, but they look at me surlily and suspiciously." "Yes," replied the interlocutor, "when a multi-millionaire goes about to-day, distributing his largesse, his libraries and organs and universities and the like, the recipients of his bounty are very apt to look up and ask suspiciously, 'Where did you get 'em?'"

That is the first question the new conscience is asking to-day of the men of wealth, "Where did you get it?" That conscience is beginning to analyse the sources of what is called "private property." It is saying to men of large wealth, "We are not so sure that 'what's yours is yours' as you claim. Part of it, how much we do not know, is due to your own enterprise and initiative, your inventive genius or your organising and administrative ability or your industry. That we will gladly recognise as yours exclusively. But we, as society, have been partners in your production of wealth, silent partners perhaps,

but none the less real and efficient partners. We, through our laws, institutions and social order, have furnished you the opportunities and privileges and the protection whereby alone your acquisition and possession of property became possible. As such partners we claim at least a right of oversight and regulation and perhaps a share in the proceeds, the dividends. And further than that, we have a strong suspicion that a part of your wealth and probably the larger part of all swollen fortunes and all abnormally large profits and dividends, arises either from the appropriation of the commonwealth or the exploitation of the production of others by means of special privileges. If that be so, we are going to abolish those special privileges, as we have the club and pistol of the highwayman, that each may have and keep his own, the public, the labourer and the captain of industry."

This new social conscience is not yet what we vaguely call "socialistic" (by which we generally mean communistic) in its view of private property. It is not demanding an equal division of all production, an equal sharing of all wealth. But it is demanding that the men of wealth and possession establish and prove a certain algebraic equation. On the one side let them put all their possessions and wealth and on the other side their service rendered to the commonweal, the benefit they have conferred upon society by their enterprise and activity. If they can establish and prove the sign of equality be-

tween the two, we shall not question their possessions, however large. But if they can not establish and prove that sign of equality, if a sign of inequality takes its place,— the opening toward their wealth and possession and the angle toward their social service or benefit conferred upon society,— then the new conscience is going to look into the matter and establish the sign of equality by a just distribution of what is called private property among the factors really producing it.

And the new conscience is questioning not only the acquisition of wealth but also the use and spending of wealth. It challenges the claim "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" It is beginning to say not only that the acquisition of wealth must be ethically and morally honest and just but that the use and expenditure of wealth must be socially useful and beneficent, at least it must not be socially harmful. It is condemning idle ostentation and wasteful luxury as economically, socially and morally wrong and bad.

All this is but one illustration of the dictum of the new social conscience that every "inherent and inalienable natural right" of the individual is inseparably connected with a social responsibility and obligation; and the larger the right claimed, the greater the responsibility that goes with it; and also that the right has no validity apart from the obligation.

Now this new social consciousness and the new

social conscience that is inspired by it are affecting all our modern thought. They are reinterpreting our conceptions of the state and its functions, of law and its purposes, of commerce and industry and the right conduct thereof, and especially of religion, its meaning, end and application to life.

The state is beginning to feel itself no longer exclusively confined to narrow police powers, to be used only to restrain otherwise unregulated competition within the limits of technical justice, to keep private greed from invading individual rights here and there. It is setting itself more and more to the task of regulating private business and directing it towards social ends. It is realising its paramount mission as the organisation of the commonweal, the upbuilding of the fabric of a just and equitable society, that is, the setting up of the Kingdom of God upon earth.

Law is ceasing to be merely negative and defensive. Its object is no longer merely to define and defend individual rights, chiefly property rights. It is becoming more and more positive and constructive. It is dealing more and more with social welfare or the commonweal. All our most recent legislation manifests that new trend. Railway regulation, statutes concerning hours and conditions of labour, particularly among women, laws abolishing child-labour are already enacted. And beyond loom promisingly minimum wage laws, old age and unemployment pensions, health insurance, etc., etc. Our legislation

is bound to become more and more "socialistic" as the popular mind puts it. The United States, probably in this respect the most backward of western civilised nations except Russia, is beginning to wake up and follow the path made by more forward nations, notably Germany. That is, law is concerning itself more and more with the bringing in of the Kingdom of God.

Business is seeing the new vision. Along the path first of welfare work and then of profit-sharing, it is feeling its way slowly but surely towards the democratisation of commerce and industry. It is dimly beginning to realise the truth of the trite but little understood statement that "capital and labour are partners in production." And if partners, then there ought to be not only a more equitable division of proceeds but also a more equitable sharing of opportunity and responsibility. That is, commerce and industry are feeling the coming of the Kingdom.

And, perhaps last of all, religion is beginning to see the vision,— the old, old vision which was the commanding ideal of the Christ,— a Kingdom of Heaven on earth, God's will done on earth as it is in heaven, a regenerated and celestial society on terrestrial ground.

The Church is still somewhat dazed by the new vision. She is feeling her way towards the newly discerned goal in a rather blundering, stumbling fashion along the path first of old-fashioned charity

and then the new-fashioned social service. She is building and maintaining institutional churches, taking up unwonted activities that are puzzling to the old-fashioned Christian. And now and then, in scattered pulpits, she is more or less boldly sounding a new note, preaching a new message, re-interpreting her gospel in larger, more novel and yet really more original terms,— terms that are nearer to the fundamental purpose of her Founder. She is talking less about "the saving of souls" and more about the setting up of the Kingdom of God on earth. Social righteousness, economic equity, industrial justice, these are becoming more and more familiar themes in our progressive and enlightened pulpits. That is, her gospel is becoming less exclusively individualistic and more social.

Now all this is somewhat disturbing and annoying to the ecclesiastical "stand-patters," some of whom sit in Bishop's chairs but more in the front pews in the middle aisle. They sigh for the good old-fashioned gospel of their grandfathers and particularly their grandmothers. They long for a "spiritual" message, that is, a message that concerns itself exclusively with "religious" themes, the metaphysics of theology, the mysteries of the other world and the mysticisms of spiritual experience rather than with the practical questions of justice, mercy and righteousness in this present world. They insist on the ancient division between the sacred and the secular. But the new social and religious conscience insists

that every most secular concern has a moral core, revolves about an ethical axis; and that the moral or ethical is ever a primary concern of religion; that Christ is the rightful sovereign and Master, not simply of a neatly fenced off corner of the individual life, but of all that life, and also of all lives and of all that web of interwoven lives which we call society, political, commercial, industrial and social.

"But," the stand-patters say, "let religion take care of the individual and society will take care of itself. Let religion save men and society will save itself. If every man, woman and child were made perfectly true, honest, just, pure and loving by religion, were soundly converted and regenerated, the millennium would arrive to-morrow. Given perfect individuals and we should have perfect society."

I deny this proposition. In the first place you might have every stone, brick and timber in your building sound and yet have a structure that would come down about your ears. The constituent materials and members of the structure must be put together in right relation, in a right architecture. Even so you might conceivably have every man, woman and child individually regenerated and even perfect and yet have an impossible and unrighteous society. You must have a right social architecture. And this right social architecture, this putting together of the constituent members of society in right, just and equitable relations, is what is meant by "social righteousness" as distinguished from "indi-

vidual righteousness." With this "big righteousness" of society religion is bound to concern itself more and more. It can not confine itself exclusively to the "little righteousness" of merely personal virtues, least of all to the largely technical pieties and proprieties of ecclesiastical behaviour.

And second, I should say in reply to the "stand-patters'" claim that religion should confine itself to dealing with the individual or to "saving souls," often and often you can not deal with the individual without dealing with his social environment. You can not save the soul without, to a degree, saving the society in which that soul is involved.

To illustrate, I have gout in my great toe. I call in two physicians. One says "I can apply my patent salve or ointment to your toe and cure it in a trice." I set him down as a quack. The other says, "Your system is run down and your blood contains too much uric acid. I will treat the diseased member but I will also tone up your system with tonics and purify your blood." I accept him as the scientific practitioner. Even so each of us is a living member in the body of society. And often the moral infirmities, yes, the sins of the individual, are due largely to the maladjustments of society about him, inhere in the evil system in which he is involved and are caused by a moral poison in the common social circulation. Therefore religion must deal with society as well as with individuals.

I know this brings up that old and insoluble prob-

lem of character, how much of it is within the power of the individual and regenerated will, inspired and backed by religious forces, and how much is fated by heredity and environment. I know that there is a power in personal religion which often makes a man conqueror over heredity and environment and even fate," a faith which is victory over the world." One can not read such a book as Harold Begbie's " Twice Born Men " or the records of the Salvation Army or of a Billy Sunday revival, without encountering instance after instance of souls, damned into the world rather than born into it, apparently doomed by both heredity and environment,— instance after instance of such souls inspired by the power of a new found faith to win seemingly impossible conquests of character.

Yes, there are such stories and they are true, thank God. They prove the power of religion to enable the individual will to triumph over circumstances. And to inspire such victories will ever be a primary mission of religion.

Yet we all know that such stories are exceptional. And we all know also that there are circumstances, there are social environments, in which it would be as impossible to grow a Christian character as it would be to grow an American Beauty rose in the ash-barrel at the kitchen door. Therefore religion must deal both with the individual will and with the environment. To lay all sin upon circumstances weakens and undermines the will, the essence of per-

sonality. For "a soft creed is worse for character than a hard life." And much of our modern materialistic philosophy, much of our socialism, yes, many of our reformers and preachers of social righteousness are open to that accusation and are guilty of that error.

But it is also true that a religion which ignores the moral or immoral influences of environment is fatally blind to the palpable facts of life and fails of its full mission.

For example, to take illustrations almost at random; if overcrowded tenements, where fathers and mothers, sons and daughters and lodgers sleep in common bed rooms, make moral decency impossible, and if the economic pressure of low wages drives many girls into prostitution, can we preach chastity from our pulpits and ignore the questions of overcrowded dwellings and department store wages? If women and child-labour in our factories grinds up the bodies, minds and souls of its victims, and makes the present, the coming and even the second generations incapable of any wholesome physical, mental or moral life, is not woman- and child-labour essentially a religious question with which the pulpit is bound to deal? If juvenile "crime" (so-called) is generally due to the explosion of youthful energies that have no proper outlet and to the "spirit of adventure in our city streets" that has no wholesome opportunity of expression, do not recreation centers and playgrounds become a direct concern of a Church which

would save the souls of the children? If the monotony and drabness of the life of the poor drives men to drink, if poverty makes intemperance as much as intemperance makes poverty, can we consider prohibition and the anti-saloon cause as properly religious concerns but the abolition of poverty as a purely "secular" campaign? Ay, if poverty be, as it unquestionably is, the most fertile soil for the growth of all kinds of sin and crime, if "the destruction of the poor is his poverty," then does not any economic reform that promises to do away with unearned poverty (for there is an unearned poverty as there is an unearned wealth — and the first is always the inevitable shadow of the other), does not such a reform become a religious reform? If the labourers in a certain industry work twelve hours a day, seven days in a week, week in and week out, month in and month out, and that at wages that can not maintain their families at the accepted level of decent living, and if such men, brutalised and bestialised by physical exhaustion and social despair, are driven to seek relief in the reactions of debauchery, what message can religion have for them?

There are everywhere in our modern world economic, industrial and social conditions which make the Christian life practically impossible. Is it not the business of religion to deal directly with those conditions and try to make the environment at least more favourable to the regenerate life?

Our concern is with the soil as well as with the seed in our sowing of the Word.

So everywhere to-day, under the inspiration of the new social consciousness and the new social conscience,— the most characteristic out-birth of our age,— state-craft, politics, law, commerce, industry and last of all, religion, are being reinterpreted and applied in new directions.

Religion especially is coming to her own, back to the original vision of Christ, the vision of a Kingdom of God on earth. To fulfil that vision she must concern herself no less with the individual than she has in the past. But she must concern herself with society more.

The Bible begins with a story of a solitary man in a garden alone with God. So religion begins with the direct relation of the individual soul with the Heavenly Father. That relation will always be of supreme concern to religion.

But the Bible ends with the vision of a heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, descending from God out of Heaven to take possession of the earth. It is the vision of heaven come to earth, a celestial society in this present world. That vision has always been the cherished dream of the great seers and leaders of men. It is now becoming more and more the passion of the multitude. And it must become the commanding and paramount ideal of the ministry and Church of to-day, if that ministry

and Church are to grasp the deepest meanings of the old Gospel of Christ, interpret that gospel intelligently to the modern mind and apply it effectively to the needs of the modern age.

CHAPTER II

WEALTH AND POVERTY

"THE Social Problem" is at bottom the economic problem. It is essentially none other than the problem of the distribution of wealth. This is the fundamental theme upon which all the social questions which confront us are but variations, the common root from which they all spring. Wealth and poverty, with all their implications and consequences, these furnish nearly all the social complexities and perplexities with which we have to deal.

Of course the problem has always existed. Wealth and poverty have always stood over against each other in all human history.

But in the modern world, with its enormous increase in production, the inequity of distribution grows daily more glaring. With the rise of the common standard of living which makes what were once luxuries now absolute necessities, the pressure of poverty becomes more and more intolerable. With luxury and ostentation most wanton on the one hand and destitution and misery most abject on the other set daily in closest touch before the

eyes of all in our great centers of population, contrasts are sharpened. With the spread of education and the increase of knowledge, particularly in economics and sociology, the spirit of inquiry is awakened and the public mind stimulated to think as never before. And finally, with the ever increasing organisation of our modern world, with capital and labour developing into great trusts and unions, with the rapid growth of the Socialist Party in politics, with the upspringing of Syndicalists and I. W. W's in industry,— the two hosts, the house of have and the house of want, are marshalled and arrayed over against one another with conscious and frowning fronts as never before in the world's history.

Therefore the problem of the distribution of production, the problems of wealth and poverty, are incalculably deepened and intensified in our age.

The facts as to the distribution of wealth are most startling to one who faces them thoughtfully for the first time.

The ignorance of most of us as to these facts, the complacent satisfaction of some of us with our share in the "swag," and the despair of many as to the possibility of any remedy,— these have been the reasons of our hitherto widely prevailing indifference to the whole question. But a widening knowledge of the facts and a deepening conviction that they are both unjust and remediable are the sources of our growing social unrest.

Take the two countries with which we are most familiar and most concerned, England and the United States.

I need not quote statistics. They can be found in appalling array in Parliamentary reports in England and in the findings of our own recent "Commission on Industrial Relations."

Books like Booth's "Bitter Cry of the Poor" or Robert Hunter's classic on "Poverty" or Scott Nearing's "Poverty and Riches" ought to burn the social conscience of England and America as with a red hot iron. Personal observation in the purlieus of Whitechapel, Lambeth, Westminster, the Thames Embankment, or rural England, and a little experience as a voluntary worker for a "charity-organisation society" in the slums of our own cities will amply confirm these startling facts.

Has religion any concern about them? Has the Christian minister any message or mission in the situation? There are many, possibly the majority of conventional Christians or Church members at present, who would answer with a decided and emphatic "no." "It is none of the minister's business. The gospel he is charged with has no concern with such matters. They are secular, not religious."

The old-fashioned religion of our grandmothers easily absolved itself from all responsibility in the matter. It was concerned exclusively with the salvation of the soul in an eschatological sense, with

life assurance and fire insurance for another world. It had a ready and easy answer to the problem. It could say "Things may be all awry in this present world. The good things of life may be most inequitably divided. All this is due to the inscrutable Providence of God. But never mind; above all don't meddle with the problem. It will all be solved satisfactorily and justly for us by God in another world. Wait with patience. Things will be set straight and evened up over yonder." It said to the poor, "Endure for a while with pious resignation. The discipline is good for your soul here and you will get justice and your reward beyond." And the utmost of its message to the unrighteously rich or the inhuman man of wealth was the vague warning, "Look out or Abraham may some day say to you as he said to Dives, 'Son, remember that thou in thy life time receivedst good things and Lazarus evil things. But now he is comforted and thou art tormented.'"

But this answer no longer answers. Partly because the modern proletariat, the disinherited of society, can no longer be put off with a justice postponed to another world. They demand justice here and now.

Partly because the modern mind is suspicious of all explanations that depend upon the "inscrutable decrees of an all wise Providence." We once referred typhoid fever and malaria to that source. We now look to the milk and the mosquitoes.

Even so we are beginning to attribute the inequitable distribution of wealth not to the inscrutable Providence of God but to the very scrutable improvidence of man, his mismanagement and maladministration of God's or nature's bounty.

And partly also because the religious mind of the day has advanced to a new point of view and a new interpretation of the meaning and purpose of religion. Salvation is no longer construed as purely eschatological. It is moral and ethical. Applied religion is the art of clean, wholesome, righteous and serviceable living. It is interpreted into terms of justice, mercy and love; and salvation into terms of character.

But even this progressive and modern interpretation has a still subtler way of evading the issue and absolving itself from all responsibility for this paramount social problem. As set forth by its ablest advocates the argument runs somewhat on this wise.

Jesus Himself on a certain occasion refused to meddle with a specific question as to the distribution of wealth. When the man from the crowd demanded "Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me," Jesus answered indignantly, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?"—and then contented Himself with adding simply a general warning against covetousness and a parable on the folly of selfish acquisition.

This incident illustrates, we are told, Jesus'

habitual attitude towards such matters and his principle and method in dealing with them. And these should also be the attitude, the method and the principle of His ambassador and representative, the Christian minister, as he faces the question of the distribution of wealth, the problems of riches and poverty. He is not to be a judge or divider. His business is simply to warn against the moral and spiritual perils of an over-emphasis on the material side of life. In fact the religion of Jesus rises above all material considerations whatsoever, whether of abundance or want, of wealth or poverty. It moves upon another plane of thought. It dwells in another universe of ideas. It is not concerned with what kind of a coat a man wears, what kind of a house he lives in or what kind of food he eats, but only with what kind of a life he lives and what kind of a character he develops.

It literally "takes no thought for food, drink or raiment." But it "seeks first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," the Kingdom being, of course, interpreted individualistically as "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" in the individual soul.

The religion of Jesus Christ would enable every man to be morally and spiritually independent of his circumstances, to rise above the moral and spiritual handicap of his condition, whatever that condition be. It would inspire him with that "faith which is victory over the world." It would

teach him to make conduct and character, faith and righteousness, love and service his paramount concerns in whatever environment he found himself. And then all material considerations of possession or lack, of abundance or want, of wealth or poverty would sink into absolute insignificance. They would become negligible. Therefore "in whatsoever state he was, he would be content, (αὐτάρκης, self-sufficient) for his sufficiency would be of God." He would depend upon the God within him and not upon the world about him. So would it teach men "both how to abound and how to be in want," the high art of being poor or the higher art of being rich and still being a man in the fullest sense of the word,— that is, a Christian.

And the example of Jesus seems to support consistently this interpretation of His teaching. He avoided all political entanglements as is illustrated in His answer to the question about the tribute money. He held Himself aloof from all reform parties or policies. At least one of His disciples belonged to a party of agitators called the Zealots, but He Himself carefully shunned all such entanglements. He seems to have been utterly without class-consciousness. He never classified Himself. He never classified others. The accidents of position and possession by which we ordinarily separate our fellows into grades and classes had no significance to him: He made no use of the titles and names whereby we mark such distinctions. All

such accidents and titles of discrimination were utterly lost and ignored in His wide vision of a common humanity, everywhere and always fundamentally and essentially the same. To Him a man was always a man and never anything more, no matter what his position or possessions: and, what is better, never anything less, no matter how low he had sunk in the established social scale. He passes in His intercourse from grade to grade of society without any visible consciousness of the transition. That transition is generally plainly marked in our conduct. We instinctively cringe before the man with a larger bank account or of a higher social position; we unconsciously patronise the man who stands lower in the social scale. Jesus never cringed and Jesus never patronised. He approaches each soul with the same reverence for its inherent dignity. He was not the friend of the rich. He was not the friend of the poor. He was the friend of man even as He was the Son of Man. He had among His companions and followers the rich and wealthy like Zacchæus, Nicodemus, Susanna, the wife of Chouza, Herod's steward, the woman with the alabaster box of precious ointment and perhaps some of the women who followed Him and ministered to Him of their substance. He had the poor also ever with Him. He was the friend of publicans and sinners and the outcast. And He made no discrimination among His followers. Such was the spiritual democracy

of Jesus. And such must be the democracy of all who would interpret Him and His message to the world. Yea, such is the democracy of His Kingdom.

Moreover it is urged, He was never interested in social groups or masses but only in the individual soul with its spiritual and moral needs and potentialities.

Therefore it is concluded Jesus was utterly indifferent to the question both in His attitude and teaching. The categories of wealth and poverty were never entertained in His consciousness. He ignored the great social problems arising out of the distribution of wealth. And so must His Church and her ministry.

This is truly a "comfortable doctrine." It relieves us of a very heavy and troublesome responsibility and we breathe freely. We may be quite as much "at ease in Zion," no matter how the fierce strife rages outside her sacred gates, as were and are the representatives of the old eschatological conception of salvation.

I have tried to state the argument fully, fairly and strongly. This presentation of Jesus' general teaching and attitude seems to me absolutely true and faithful, *so far as it goes.* But the conclusion arrived at seems fundamentally false, at least radically incomplete, both with regard to the mind of Jesus and also the duty of His Church and her ministry in this matter.

It requires an impossible stretch of the imagination and a disingenuous twisting of the evidence to make Jesus out a mere social agitator as Bouck White does. But it requires an equal stretch of the imagination and an utter ignoring of much of the evidence to make Him indifferent in His teaching and attitude in regard to wealth and poverty or to maintain that He avoided or was unconscious of the moral and social problems arising therefrom.

The effect of His message, its attractions and repulsions, as contrasted with the effect of the conventional preaching of the Church to-day, its attractions and repulsions,— this consideration alone should give us pause.

While Jesus had His following among the wealthy and while He made no discrimination between rich and poor, yet it is perfectly manifest that the majority, if not the mass, of His following came from what we should call the proletariat. His followers from the ranks of the wealthy and those of high social position are few in number. We know them almost by name and can count them practically on our fingers. But His following among the poor and those of humble social position are a great host. "The common people heard Him gladly." He was known as the "friend of publicans and sinners," the harlot, the people of the streets and the fields, the social outcasts. The same composition may be found in the followings of the most radical social reformers and movements to-day.

There may always be found in such social groups a few "sports" and exceptions, men and women of wealth and high position whose consciences are still sensitive enough to respond to the appeal for fundamental justice, even at the cost of sacrifice of esteem and the loss of caste among their peers. But the mass comes from the proletariat. And it was just as true of Jesus as it is of the modern radical, that the masses received and followed Him gladly, while the privileged, the aristocrats of high position or possession, for the most part, instinctively from the first regarded Him with suspicion, dislike and fear, and finally persecuted and destroyed Him.

Contrast with this following of Jesus, as plainly visible in the gospels, the composition of the typical and conventional Christian Church to-day. It is made up chiefly of the comfortable and well-to-do with a plentiful admixture of the rich and a tattered fringe of the poor and humble, mostly those who are content to be dependent on its charities. But the bulk of the proletariat is outside its pale. The Church is perplexed and sometimes distressed over her "loss of the masses." She feels instinctively that it indicates that she does not occupy the position, deliver the message, or fulfil the mission of her Master. The Church to-day largely occupies the position and displays the mind of the Pharisee rather than of Jesus. Even the most conservative and prejudiced must admit that this statement is in large degree true.

Why is it so? What is the secret of these contrasts between the present typical composition of the Christian Church and the make up of the original following of Jesus; between the attractions and repulsions of Jesus and the attractions and repulsions of the conventional Church to-day? Must we not seek that secret in the typical message of the Church to-day and the characteristic message of Jesus, particularly in relation to wealth and poverty, which is the fundamental social problem?

That difference is evident to the thoughtful observer. It is chiefly a difference in stress, accent and emphasis. We must remember that we have only bits and fragments of Jesus' teaching. Each reporter evidently relates such sayings only as peculiarly struck his attention and fell in with his own point of view. From such reports the written record of the "logia" or "sayings" was probably made up. From such hints and suggestions we must reconstruct our outline of the general body of His teaching on any subject much as the scientist restores the skeleton of a mammoth from the fragment of a jaw or a bit of a leg-bone.

It is not very difficult to get a general idea of His attitude toward wealth and poverty and the accent and emphasis of His message to rich and poor respectively. Illustrations of His attitude toward wealth abound.

I can but suggest a few out of many for the

reader's consideration. I have not space to expand or explicate them. In the cleansing of the temple is suggested His righteous indignation at the dishonesty, graft and oppressive monopoly of the High Priests' business carried on therein.

There is His denunciation of the "idle landlordism" of the Pharisees who "devoured widows' houses and for a pretence made long prayers."

There is the whole body of teaching concerning wealth recorded especially in St. Luke's gospel. I know the critics attribute that teaching to St. Luke's Ebionistic prejudices. But when I read the "magnificat" of the mother, and the epistle of James, the alleged brother of Jesus, and find in both the same strains, I feel as if I had gotten a sense of the atmosphere that pervaded that home in Nazareth in which Jesus grew up and by which His mind was formed. I doubt therefore whether the evangelist or reporter has seriously coloured or exaggerated His sayings on this subject.

There is the parable of Dives and Lazarus. There is the biting parable of the rich man and his barns. There is the startling counsel given to the rich young man who made the "great refusal." There are such uncompromising utterances as these, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." "Ye can not serve God and Mammon."

And so one might go on and on. But I have said

enough to show that we do not ordinarily appreciate the full force of Jesus' peculiar attitude and message in regard to wealth. When we do face it squarely and honestly we are perplexed and confused by it. It is so utterly different from the conventional attitude and message of the Church to-day. What shall we say in the face of this situation?

I should say this much at least and in part.

Jesus was plainly indifferent to all merely material questions, such as those of wealth and poverty *per se*. He Himself "took no thought for food, drink and raiment" (the only things wealth can buy in the last analysis) but ever sought "first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness." And He would have all His followers of the same mind. This was his accent and emphasis on life. He would put first things first. Faith, righteousness, love and service, these were the paramount ends of life. All else was secondary and subservient to those ends, and, compared to them, utterly insignificant. Provided these ends were attained, nought else mattered. Position or possession were wholly indifferent. Character alone counted. Therefore He would inspire a faith which should make His disciples independent of circumstances, "victors over the world." He would teach them "how to abound and how to be in want," the high art of being rich or being poor and yet being clean, loving, righteous and godly. If a man could make

money honestly and serviceably, if he could keep his conduct and character unstained and unperverted through the processes of acquisition and the perils of possession, well and good. If a man could keep conduct and character wholesome and sound, steady and stable through the terrible stress and strain of poverty, well and good.

But Jesus was keen-sighted. He discriminated clearly the elements of the problem. With the merely material aspects of wealth and poverty He had no concern whatsoever. As material categories the terms rich and poor did not enter into His consciousness. But He saw the inevitable and inherent moral implications of both wealth and poverty. With them He was intensely concerned and with them He dealt with a marvellous directness, fearlessness, clearness and strength.

What are these moral implications of wealth and poverty which Jesus saw and with which He concerned Himself? It seems to me that they are chiefly three.

First, the spirit which makes material wealth, its acquisition and possession, an end in itself and that the primary, if not paramount, end of all thought and endeavour, distorts the whole vision of life, vitiates all its real values and perverts and inverts all its true standards. It is utterly inconsistent with and fatally hostile to any spiritual interpretation or use of life, that is, to religion. It is inherently and essentially impossible to harness

the mercenary spirit or the profit-motive to the service of any ideal. There is no alchemy which can bring golden results out of such leaden motives.

Therefore covetousness is one of the most deadly of sins and upon it fell some of Jesus' heaviest denunciations. "Ye can not serve God and Mammon" is one of His severest and most uncompromising utterances.

We recognise that the mercenary motive utterly vitiates art, literature, the practice of medicine, the art of teaching and the preaching of the Gospel. We should recognise, if we had a clearer discernment, that the profit-motive, sole or paramount, equally vitiates the running of railroads or the making of pig iron. It is only as the service-motive is made paramount and the profit-motive secondary, only as the material return for service is made not an end in itself, but simply a means to the further end of enlarged and more effective service,— it is only by such a standard of values that any business, industry, vocation or profession can be redeemed, Christianised and so enter into Jesus' scheme of life or His "Kingdom of God." Whether the abolition of the profit-motive can be accomplished by any external scheme of reform and reconstruction like socialism, as socialists claim it can, is extremely doubtful. Socialism might aid in the process by furnishing an environment that should largely eliminate profit and put a premium on service. But religion, the religion of Jesus

Christ, proposes a more radical programme. It is nothing less than the regeneration and conversion, the extirpating of the profit or mercenary motive out of all life and the substituting of the service-motive as its mainspring.

The end and aim of socialism and the end and aim of the teaching of Jesus are identical so far as the substituting of service for profit as the dynamic of life is concerned. But the methods of approach to that end and aim are different. Socialism is the approach from without and Christianity is the approach from within.

Plainly according to the teachings of the gospel, a man can not be a true disciple of Jesus, that is, a Christian, if he makes wealth an end in itself, if he carries on any business or pursues any vocation, even the ministry, for profit only or chiefly. Service must be essential, profit incidental; service must be the end, profit the means.

But if we preached that doctrine, as Jesus plainly did, we should have to condemn and denounce as unchristian, heathen and pagan most of our modern industry and commerce. For undeniably under our present system, the profit-motive and the mercenary spirit are dominant, if not paramount, and are recognised as perfectly legitimate. Their right to rule is seldom questioned. We try to clip the claws and file the teeth and occasionally muzzle the jaws of the beast of the jungle. But to kill the beast never enters our minds. And yet except the

beast be killed, that is except service replace profit as the paramount end of this and all other human activity, the world can not be Christianised or the Kingdom of God come.

How many Christian ministers have the vision to see this plain implication of Jesus' teaching and the courage to preach it boldly?

Second, Jesus evidently saw clearly that much wealth, which was counted entirely legitimate and respectable, was neither the fruit of industry, the reward of virtue nor the return for service rendered. It was simply the booty of predation or the accumulation of parasitism. Upon such wealth fell His stern condemnation, as in His denunciation of the trade carried on in the Temple Courts by the High Priests' trust or the Landlordism of the Pharisees.

We may be sure He would be equally keen to discern and bold to denounce the methods by which swollen fortunes are accumulated to-day by many of our modern Pharisees, our prominent Churchmen, and the chief supporters of our charities, missions and parishes. Should not His ambassadors and representatives to-day share His mind and spirit in this matter?

The most conservative preacher would certainly feel fully within his sacred or priestly functions in denouncing from his pulpit wealth gained by open highway robbery like that of the Jesse James' gang or the unspeakably unclean profits of the white-

slave trade. Most of our Protestant parsons would even regard the dividends of the liquor traffic as "tainted money." Some might even go to the length (though this supposition somewhat strains the imagination) of hesitating to accept brewery or distillery stock as endowments for sacred enterprises.

If our conservative brethren would but read the Story of the Standard Oil as told by Ida Tarbell and others, if they would make themselves familiar with labour-conditions, hours and wages as they existed in the steel mills at the time of the Pittsburgh survey, if they knew the facts with regard to child labor in the coal mines, the silk mills and the cotton factories, yes, if they analysed the methods by which much, if not most of our great fortunes are made, through outright dishonesty and graft sometimes and generally through the appropriation of the commonwealth or the exploitation of the production of others by means of special privileges and the ruthless use of power — if they faced these facts, could they regard as altogether clean money Standard oil profits or coal, silk and cotton dividends, or could they accept without qualms of conscience many large and lauded gifts to holy purposes?

At least I for one feel that I know what Jesus would do and say if He faced such facts, for I know what He did and said when He faced similar facts though on a smaller scale in His own day. Do

we, as His ambassadors, share His mind and display His courage in such matters? Let us remember "if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His," whatever be his ordination, consecration, position, ecclesiastical authority or claims of Apostolic succession. About wealth as such neither the Christ nor His ambassador, the Christian minister, has anything to say. It is a matter of moral indifference. But against wealth that is unrighteous in its acquisition and unserviceable in its use, the Christian conscience must express itself in terms of moral indignation and reprobation.

But third and chiefly, Jesus recognised certain moral perils, handicaps and temptations as inherent in certain economic conditions,— in mere possession or lack, abundance or want,— irrespective of the moral or immoral or unmoral sources of such wealth and property. Consequently there are certain characteristic and typical sins of the rich and of the poor respectively. With these He was intensely concerned and with these also He dealt plainly.

What these characteristic and typical sins of wealth and poverty are, we all know. They persist throughout the ages. They are the same to-day as in Jesus' day, only perhaps accentuated by modern conditions.

It is a common place of observation that the middleclass, those who are neither rich nor poor, or-

dinarily constitute the sound moral core of society. Society is most apt to decay at the top and at the bottom. It develops its scum (some of which is sometimes called its cream) and its dregs. And they frequently resemble each other in their moral qualities. The typical sins of wealth and poverty are singularly identical.

Both poor and rich are frequently dishonest. The pressure of necessity in the one case and the lure of the game in the other often produce the same result. The only difference is that the dishonesty of the rich is apt to be bigger and more powerful than the dishonesty of the poor and therefore more frequently escapes the clutches of the statutes; and also more subtle and indirect and therefore escapes the condemnation and even the notice of the public. The little man steals a hod of coal from a car and is branded as a common thief. The big man, by subtle and legalised methods, steals a mine and becomes a magnate.

Both rich and poor are frequently intemperate in their pleasures. For the monotony and despair of poverty and the satiety and ennui of wealth often result in the same reactions of moral abandonment, the seeking of colour and tang to an otherwise intolerably insipid and dreary life in the unbridled indulgence of the lusts of the flesh. But the poor man gets drunk in the corner saloon and is put in jail. The rich man gets drunk in his club or his home and is put to bed by his valet.

The all-absorbing struggle for a bare physical existence in the one case and the all-absorbing interest in the game of acquisition of wealth and particularly power in the other, often leave both without the time or mind for the higher concerns of life, culture, religion and the common service; consequently both are apt to be coarse, vulgar and materialistic.

Particularly is wealth by its mere possession apt to distort spiritual vision, materialise all the standards of life and blind its possessor to the finer issues, the ideal values and ends of life. That, I believe, in part at least, is the ground of Jesus' stern utterance, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." That also is the reason of His severe demand upon the rich young man, "Go sell all that thou hast and give to the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven. And come and follow me." This youth had all the ingenuousness, the enthusiasm and the idealism natural to youth. Therefore "when Jesus looked upon him He loved him." But He saw the peril of possession, how natural and inevitable it was that this splendid vision should be blurred and finally blinded in the murk of materialism. Some heroic surgery was necessary to keep that spiritual vision. Therefore the youth had better sacrifice his possessions than risk losing his soul. It is supremely difficult to keep simplicity, humility, idealism and a keen sense

of spiritual values in an atmosphere of wealth. Therefore it is "hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." That at least is the plain teaching of Jesus.

Understand me, I am not condemning wholesale the rich and the poor as classes. I am not saying that both rich and poor are all alike thieves, drunkards, debauchées or practical materialists, any more than I am saying that all the middle class, the bourgeois, are honest, sober, chaste and spiritually minded. I am simply trying to show that certain moral tendencies, temptations and perils inhere naturally and inevitably in certain economic conditions; and that therefore the characteristic and typical sins of wealth and poverty are apt to be much alike in certain aspects. In other aspects they are radically different.

For the sins of poverty are generally sins of ignorance and necessity, sins of weakness under economic and social pressure, sins that are masters of the will rather than servants of the desire; while the sins of wealth are more commonly sins of knowledge and power, the servants of lust and passion, even of whim and caprice.

I believe that Jesus fully recognised these moral implications and consequences of wealth and poverty. In this aspect, wealth and poverty become not merely material facts but moral problems. Therefore and so far He dealt with them. But

He dealt with them in different manners and with a discriminating touch.

To the sins of wealth, the sins of power and knowledge, of wilfulness and will, the servant sins, He was stern, searching, scathing and uncompromising.

To the sins of poverty, the sins of necessity and ignorance, the master-sins, He was ever tender, merciful and considerate. In both cases He hated the sin but loved the sinner. But the one He regarded as more or less the master of his sin, the other as its victim. Therefore the one He endeavoured to arouse by denunciation. The other He tried to inspire with a new vision of opportunity and new sense of self-respect, of moral and spiritual potentiality.

That stress and accent of His message seem to me the reason why He ordinarily attracted the poor and lowly, even the publicans, sinners and the very harlots of the streets, while He often repelled the rich and the powerful.

And also the opposite stress and accent in the typical and usual message of the Church and her ministry to-day seem to me the secret of the opposite attractions and repulsions of our modern conventional Christianity.

We often preach a smooth and easy gospel to the rich and powerful and a harsh and stern message, hardly a gospel, to the poor and lowly, par-

ticularly the publicans and sinners. And for the most part, we have nothing at all for the harlots except loathing avoidance.

We are generally careful and skilful (tactful is the favourite word) in manipulating and massaging the consciences of the gentlemen and ladies in the front pews who support the Church, her charities, her missions and her ministers, while we give full vent to our righteous indignation in denouncing to our comfortable hearers, the materialism, the drunkenness and debauchery, the ruffianism and even sometimes the very social discontent of the proletariat which is rarely represented in our congregations.

We call out loudly and virtuously for the enacting and enforcing of laws which shall suppress with a strong hand the vices that root in poverty. We would shut up the saloon, the poor man's club, all places of cheap and questionable amusement and recreation, etc. The average minister is strong on "shutting up" but he generally thinks little about "opening up," giving new and better opportunities for wholesome recreation and enjoyment to lives maddened by monotony and despair. And he thinks least of all about remedying the wrong social conditions which naturally and inevitably produce such vices and not at all about the possibility of abolishing the unearned poverty which is their tap-root.

For example, as Sabbatarians we may preach the observance of the Lord's day, not as a social boon

but as a religious requirement. That is religion. But that men should be forced to toil twelve hours a day, seven days a week, month in and month out, until they are so exhausted physically that they are incapable of any higher life than that of the animal, until they are driven to seek relief in the riotous indulgence of the flesh,— that does not seem to us a religious question, proper for the pulpit. We simply denounce the drunkenness and debauchery of the over-wrought labourer without considering the physical and social causes thereof: causes for which the employer who sits in the front pew and commends the sermon may be largely responsible, or at least the system which he supports and profits by is certainly responsible. But of him or that system we dare say nothing. That would be " mixing business with religion " and taking up a secular subject in the sacred desk.

On the other hand we are silent for the most part about the identical vices of the rich. We would not think of demanding the enactment and enforcing of laws and reforms which should abolish unjust privilege and thus sap the roots that feed so rankly most of these vices. That would be mingling politics with religion. But preaching prohibition is not mingling politics with religion.

I might multiply illustrations. But surely it must be evident to every thoughtful observer that the whole accent and emphasis of the modern conventional and orthodox pulpit in dealing with the

moral implications of wealth and want and the characteristic sins of the rich and the poor, are exactly the reverse of the accent and emphasis of Jesus' message. Consequently the attractions and repulsions of the modern church are precisely the opposite of the attractions and repulsions of Jesus.

The proletariat look upon the Church, for the most part, with utter indifference, often with suspicion and sometimes with hatred. They regard her as culpably ignorant of or guiltily indifferent to their wrongs and their rights alike, unsympathetic with their just complaints and righteous aspirations, all of which are moral and therefore religious questions. And they have ample ground for so thinking. Therefore they let her severely alone.

The privileged classes on the other hand often look upon the Church quite naturally and reasonably as a bulwark of conservatism, right or wrong. Religion, as conventionally taught, ought to be, if the proletariat would only give some attention to it, a good police force to restrain the turbulence and repress the social discontent of the masses.

Therefore they support and patronise the Church as a useful public institution, though they do not always attend its worship in large numbers. That is, we have largely lost the masses who followed Jesus and won the classes who crucified Him.

In view of this undeniable situation, is it not high time for the Church to examine herself anew in this matter with deep searchings of heart? Is

it not high time for her ministry to study afresh seriously and searchingly the message and method of Jesus in dealing with the moral implications of wealth and want, the characteristic sins of the rich and the poor, and to conform their message and method thereto, cost what it may? And cost much it must.

CHAPTER III

CHARITY OR JUSTICE

THE difference between Jesus' attitude towards wealth and poverty and the usual attitude of the Church and her ministry to-day lies not only in the difference of accent and emphasis in dealing with the characteristic sins of wealth and poverty. It lies also in the method, the way of approaching and handling the whole social problem involved.

As I hope to show in a later chapter, Jesus was the great radical of all the ages. With whatever subject or problem He deals, however apparently incidental His touch upon it, He ever penetrates to the fundamental and essential principles underlying the whole question. We, for the most part, touch only the symptoms that lie upon the surface. He was radical. We are superficial.

The usual reaction of the Church to-day to any aspect of the social problem is charity in one form or another. Set before the ordinary conscientious Christian any misery or wrong arising out of economic pressure, any social injustice or industrial oppression whereby the weak are disinherited and made to suffer, and immediately he goes for his own pocketbook, if he be in the pew, or somebody's else

pocketbook, if he be in the pulpit. Money and what money will buy or hire in the way of supplies, relief or service, seems to us the sovereign panacea for " all the ills the body social is heir to."

The common conception of the Church's relation to and mission in the social conflict which goes on everywhere and always about us and which has developed such intensity in our modern world — the common conception of the Church's relation to and mission in this warfare is that she follows the fighting forces as a neutral and non-combatant, unconcerned in the strife itself or the causes that inspire it, but interested only in the relief of its victims. She is the red-cross and sanitary commission and the ambulance corps in this great war. Her business is not with the conditions that produce misery but only with misery itself. She is to comfort and console, give aid and relief. She can not or is not called upon to prevent or cure. Symptoms, not causes, are her concern.

The Church of Christ has always been sensitive to the appeals of want and suffering. She has always been keen and ready to minister to need and misery. Almost all the manifold charities and beneficences of the modern world may be rightfully claimed by her as her legitimate, if not immediate, offspring. All the great institutions and organisations that minister to the relief of suffering humanity, such as hospitals, homes, asylums, and even public charities, municipal, state and national, have

been directly or indirectly her creation, or the result, direct or indirect, of her influence and inspiration. She has ever set the example and led the way in all these fields of service as she has in education. And she does so still on our frontiers and in heathen lands, in all regions where a lower standard of civilisation prevails. She is ever the pioneer and guide in this path and the initiator and sustainer of such enterprises until the public conscience is sufficiently sensitised and educated to compel the state to take up the task. Alms-giving has ever been a cardinal Christian virtue. And the administration of alms, as well as the instigation and direction of charitable and beneficent service, have always been recognised as legitimate functions of the Christian ministry.

And there has been great and noble progress in the Church's work in these directions. The science and art of charity have been carefully studied and wisely and widely developed under Christian influences.

Mediæval charity was impulsive and indiscriminate. It often looked more to the merit and reward of the giver than to the real welfare of the receiver, much less to the well-being of society. All alms were meritorious however bestowed. Consequently mediæval charity was a fruitful source of fraud, beggary and pauperism, as indiscriminate charity is to-day. There is much ground for the assertion that such charity is often more pernicious in its effects than any vice.

But we have grown wiser than our fathers. We have developed scientific and organised charity: the charity which considers not simply the temporary relief of the immediate need and suffering but the further welfare of society in general and in particular the self-respect and moral well-being of the beneficiary and looks forward to his ultimate restoration as a self-supporting and contributing member of society. Right noble and effective work such charity is doing in the great world of human need.

And still better, beyond all this giving of material relief, we have developed a new type of social service in our churches, hospitals, associated charities, social settlements and like organisations. Somebody has said that "scientific charity is giving something that you don't want to somebody else that doesn't want it. And organised scientific charity is giving something that you don't want to a corporation that the corporation may give it to somebody that doesn't want it. But Christian charity is giving yourself to somebody that needs you." And there is much of such Christian charity in the work of the Christian Church and the Christian ministry to-day. They are inspiring and training the Christian people to Christian social service. Through well-equipped parish houses and institutional churches, through various Church societies and in connection with various organisations outside the Church, and through individual effort, earnest Christian workers are everywhere to-day in

this realm of social service giving recreation, uplift, opportunity, interest, joy, fellowship, inspiration, self-respect and hope to many barren, solitary and discouraged lives. Right Christian work all this is.

But still, in the last analysis, it is charity, the giving of alms, relief and service to the needy. There it stops. It still dwells on the surface of the social problem. It deals with symptoms, effects, results, not with causes. It is of the nature of "first-aid to the injured" in the battle of life, but it does not look towards the abolition of the warfare. It treats symptoms with emollients and sedatives: it does not diagnose or attack the disease. It does not ordinarily even think about the causes, economic, industrial and social which make so much of this misery that requires charity and social service. So it is perpetually mopping up the floor but does not try to turn off the spigot.

Now charity is all right when wisely exercised. It will ever be needed by the inefficient, the deficient and the unfortunate who will be with us always, more or less, in any state of society we may achieve. And it is called for particularly in our present ill-adjusted order by the immediate distress of the socially-wronged and industrially oppressed. We must give "first-aid to the injured" until we can stop the war. Therefore let us cultivate this grace of charity among our people. Let us study and develop the science and art of wise

beneficence and efficient social service. Perhaps it will lead to a further and more valuable result, the awakening of a new suspicion among our workers that there is something radically wrong in our social, economic and industrial system and the stimulation of investigation thereinto.

But beyond this primary and perpetual demand which the "social problem" makes upon the Church and her ministry, there is another deeper and more essential demand to which we have hitherto been for the most part both deaf and blind. The masses of toiling and suffering humanity, the proletariat especially, feel bitterly to-day this blindness and deafness in the Christian Church and her ministry. Sometimes they express that feeling fiercely. More generally they show it by their supreme indifference to us and all for which we stand.

They are more and more resenting our charity. First because charity almost always involves patronage. That spirit of patronage is extremely subtle and often unconscious. But it is almost inevitable. The charity worker, even the social service worker, can scarcely avoid the attitude of superiority and condescension. "They that exercise authority among them are called benefactors. But it shall not be so among you. For all ye are brethren."

Ah, how hard it is for any giver of charity or any social service worker, how hard it is for the Christian Church and her ministry, to lay aside the

mien of authority and the attitude of patronage or condescension and acquire the temper of true democracy and the spirit of genuine brotherhood as suggested in those words of the Master. I think there must have been a sad smile on Jesus' lips as He uttered them. The world is mortally weary of a condescending and patronising charity, beneficence and even social service. But it is heart-hungry for real democracy and genuine brotherhood.

But, second and chiefly, the masses resent our charity of whatsoever sort, whether in the form of alms or social service, because they feel instinctively that it is often made a substitute for justice. And they know that justice is of the very essence of the Gospel and religion of Jesus Christ. That is why the name of Jesus has been cheered and the mention of the Church and her ministry has been hissed at Socialist gatherings.

The Church and her ministry sometimes accept with unctious flattery and unquestioning submission the gifts of wealth that is known to be dishonest and unrighteous or the charity of acknowledged tyrants and oppressors in the industrial world, and then in turn bestow it patronisingly upon the victims of that dishonesty and oppression as largesse, if not as bribes and hush-money to quiet their justified "social unrest." Is it any wonder that the recipients look up suspiciously from the proffered dole and ask, "Where did you get it?"?

Because she has so largely substituted a tainted charity for a clean justice, the masses have so largely left the Church to-day. That is the chief reason, I believe, why the Church does not normally reach the "working classes." She is patronised by her patrons and in turn tries to patronise their victims. And they will have none of her, her patrons or her patronage.

It is not simply spiritual indifference and crass materialism that keep the masses out of the church to-day, though, God knows, there is much of such spiritual indifference and crass materialism in all classes. But I verily believe there is more among the privileged classes than among the disinherited masses. There is an ardent, consuming passion for social justice and economic democracy in the hearts of the masses to-day and that passion is essentially religious. It is not mere greed for a larger share in the wealth they help to produce which causes the wide-spread social unrest that prevails among our toilers. It is this same passion for justice and democracy. It shows itself in their self-denials and sacrifices of the poor for each other individually and in the spirit of chivalry and brotherhood which characterises many a labour union. Indeed it is the fundamental and essential inspiration and ideal of the whole labour movement, in spite of the rank dishonesties and injustices which are only too evident on the surface in their occasional actions and utterances; things which provoke our too-ready

and shallow criticism and by which we sometimes seek to justify our indiscriminate condemnation of the whole movement.

It cries aloud in propagandas like that of the Single Tax and Socialism. Socialism has become superficially un-Christian and irreligious chiefly by reaction against this apparent lack in the Christian Church and her ministry of any concern for social justice. These great movements for social justice, whatever we may think of their economic or political programmes, are in heart and spirit deeply religious, though perhaps often unconsciously so. They are imbued and inspired with the fundamental principles of Jesus Christ. They need a spiritual interpretation in order to understand themselves. They want the sustaining motive of a religious faith. And we, the Christian ministry, ought to meet that demand and satisfy that need. But we do not. I do not mean that we should throw ourselves into parties or movements with whose economic programmes and methods we can not conscientiously agree or about which we have not sufficient expert knowledge to hold a conviction or express an opinion. I do not mean that we should all become either socialists or single taxers or what-not. Our concern is, as Jesus' concern was, with spiritual principles, not economic policies or political programmes, with motives not with methods, as I shall try to show in my next chapter. But I do mean that we ought heartily to sympathise with

the ethical passion, the consuming concern for social justice, for real democracy and genuine brotherhood, which inspires all these movements and we ought boldly to express that sympathy in our pulpits and out of them, cost what it may, and it will be sure to cost something. We ought fearlessly to denounce the very real wrongs and oppressions which they are fighting, even if sometimes we may believe that they are fighting them in mistaken ways and offering insufficient remedies for our social ills.

But the Christian ministry has for the most part been too blind or too timorous to do this. And consequently these movements have largely lost the sanifying and regulating influences which religion might have given them: and our conventional religion has largely lost the moral passion and virility which these movements might have contributed to it: and the Church has altogether lost great masses of men who have gone out of her fold to seek in these fields of warfare and endeavour a reality, a religious value and an inspiration which they could not find in her message or mission as commonly presented by her representatives.

And yet we cannot explore with any thoroughness our special field of charity and social service without encountering this deeper demand for social justice. We cannot study attentively the superficial symptoms of the social diseases of poverty, distress and suffering, the symptoms we are trying to relieve, without being compelled to inquire into

their economic, industrial and other social causes. We can not go very far in any by-path even of charity or philanthropy without being led out inevitably into this farther and wider field of battle for social righteousness.

Let me offer a few illustrations. I quote first from a report of the National Conference on Charities and Correction held a few years ago in St. Louis, this report being printed in *The Survey:*

"Perhaps there was nothing more significant at St. Louis than the discussion of widows. Every time the question came up it switched over from plans for relief or from any other angle at which it was approached, to an accusing question, How came they to be widows?

"It sounds all but ridiculous to speak of 'preventing widows,' yet that was what was discussed. It was in a way the keynote of the meeting, for every problem of dependence, of education, of crime, of health, is infinitely sharpened when it falls on a woman's shoulders. Did the boys run wild for lack of a father's stern, firm hand; did the girls fall into evil ways because the mothers were away at work; did scanty women's wages mean meagre meals and a rickety baby; were all the children sent to work early at the first, futureless task that offered wages; did the mother break down from the double hazard of self-support and homemaking; did she contract tuberculosis in an insanitary factory; did she go insane from worry; did she crowd lodgers

into her home — if any one of a score of such things happened, the question was not, why did it happen, but why was she a widow?

" So the workers in charity turned from their unending task of filling the widow's cruse and demanded of industry in its characteristic accidents and diseases, in the deadly monotony and speeding up of its processes, in the inadequacy of its wages as measured in terms of family life — demanded of industry an answer as to why it has put upon society a charge for pensions such as no government has ever borne from war. So it is, that charity seeks justice."

Thus at St. Louis the Charity and Correction workers turned their attention from the superficial task of relieving widows to the deeper task of " preventing widows." And this current year (1917) I am glad to say, they have gone still more deeply into their fundamental problem. They are to consider at their annual meeting as their one paramount subject, " Poverty, its Causes and Cure."

Again, at the beginning of the last century an organisation was formed in England with the title, " The Society for Superseding the Work of Climbing Boys." Its object was to protect chimney sweeps in their dangerous occupation. Surely no more modest, harmless and lady-like philanthropic enterprise could be imagined than this, none apparently less charged with any social dynamite, none less likely to lead into the dangerous fields of poli-

tics. Its very name, so characteristically English in its wording, seems to mark it as an association of gentle and respectable old maids, who would naturally be worried about "climbing boys." Yet from these extremely modest and exclusively philanthropic beginnings, they were steadily led step by step out into the field of political agitation and legislation, until finally there grew out of this movement the whole English and indeed world-wide system of government inspection and regulation of industries in the interest of the safety and welfare of the workers therein.

Again to take an illustration that has a less happy issue.

Some wealthy and philanthropic ladies in a small manufacturing city hankered after some form of social service that should give expression to their altruistic sentiments. They wanted to do something "for" the poor. They looked about for the most harmless kind of an enterprise, one that should be least likely to involve them in any social, economic or industrial questions or become in any wise tainted with even a suspicion of radicalism. It must be exclusively charitable and philanthropic. At last they hit upon anti-tuberculosis work. Surely no field could be more remote from those dangerous regions. They formed an "Anti-tuberculosis League." They employed a trained visiting nurse and sent her about her work. Unfortunately for the ladies of the league, the nurse

had a scientific turn of mind. She was not content to deal with symptoms, she began to look into causes. She was not satisfied to furnish fresh eggs and milk to the sufferers with directions as to how to care for their sputum, etc., etc. She began to ask, "Why, in a small city out in the wholesome open country, should there be so much tuberculosis?" And she soon found her answer. The causes lay in insanitary factories and dark, dirty and over-crowded tenements, in long hours of labour in unhealthy surroundings, particularly on the part of women and children, which left the toilers exhausted and unfit to resist the insidious encroachments of the disease, and in wages so low that the wage-earners could not afford to buy enough nourishing food to keep up vitality or maintain a decent standard of living. She so reported to the society that employed her. But the ladies of the league were the wives of the men who owned the insanitary factories and the unwholesome tenements and exacted the long hours of labour and paid the low wages. Charity was interfering with business, philanthropy meddling with industry. This was as bad a combination as the mixture of religion and politics. It was likely to generate a dangerous social explosive. Therefore the nurse was discharged and the league was dissolved.

So it is always and everywhere. The medical profession inaugurates campaigns against contagious and endymic diseases. They start with purely

medical work. They give medicines, treatment and advice in hospitals and dispensaries. But they are soon brought face to face with the living condition of the poor in the crowded, unwholesome tenements and slums. Therefore they next set on foot outdoor social service departments and try to grapple with the problem in that way, giving advice and directions to the people in their homes as to prophylaxis, hygiene, nourishment, etc. But they soon find that outdoor relief and social service touch but the fringe of the problem. There looms up the inevitable question of social justice. There is the land question in the form of high rents to those parasites of society, the idle landlords, which necessarily produce the overcrowded tenement and slum. There is the economic and industrial question, the living wage, a fair share in the products of their industry, which alone can enable the toilers to maintain a decent standard of wholesome living.

The Young Women's Christian Associations try to surround the working girls in our large cities with safeguards that shall protect them against overwhelming temptations; they establish boarding houses with wholesome moral influences and cheap rates (which rates often lower the standard of living, bring down wages and thereby aggravate the economic problem). Our Florence Crittendon Homes try to restore the fallen after their first lapse, a noble and most Christian work. But

sooner or later each is brought face to face with the grim economic pressure which crushes the weak and helpless woman or forces her to sell her body for bread, or the other twin evil of poverty, the lack of all comfort, cheer and recreation, the dreary, colourless monotony of life which drives them by reaction to the same abyss.

Yes, every by-path of charity and every side issue of philanthropy lead at last straight up to the fundamental question of social justice and out into the field of economic and industrial reform, of social re-adjustment and reconstruction.

In summing up this point let me quote from an address, entitled, "Charity and Justice," delivered to the National Conference of Charities and Correction by that foremost woman of America, Jane Addams of Hull House.

"In an attempt to review the recent trend of charity, that which has appeared most striking is the gradual coming together of two groups of people who have too often been given to suspicion of each other and sometimes to actual vituperation of each other. One group who have traditionally been moved by pity for the poor we call the charitable" (and the church has hitherto belonged almost wholly to this group); "the other, larger or smaller in each generation, always fired by a 'hatred of injustice' we call the radicals. The two groups, as the result of a growing awareness of distress and of a slowly deepening perception of causes, are

at last uniting in an effective demand for juster social conditions. The charitable have been brought into this combination through the conviction that the poverty and crime with which they constantly deal are the result of untoward industrial" (and she might have added unjust economic)" conditions; while the radicals have been slowly forced to the conclusion that, if they would make an effective appeal to public opinion, they must utilise carefully collected data as to the effect of existing conditions upon the poor and the criminal. It is as if the charitable had been brought through the care of the individual to the contemplation of social causes; and as if the radical had been forced to test his doctrine by a sympathetic observation of actual people." And then Miss Addams asks this searching question, " Is it not time that the members of this conference of Charities and Correction who have been brought close to suffering, feebleness and wrong-doing, are but fulfilling a paramount obligation when they take up the study of social conditions? Does not the obligation to trace poverty back to its immediate and contributing causes belong foremost and professionally to those whose business it is to care for the wounded in the unequal battle of modern industry? "

And that searching question is most pertinent to the Church and her ministry to-day. It is being forced upon them from every side and it is hoped also by their own awakening conscience.

The path we are now treading leads inevitably to that issue. We began with alms-giving but that was soon found to be inadequate, if not pernicious. We next ventured forth into the field of social service which now occupies most of the attention and energies of our more progressive leaders. But we are beginning to find that superficial. Beyond and beneath this region of symptoms lies the region of causes. And into that we must next venture boldly but wisely. And I speak not simply of specific and individual causes of specific and individual problems here and there, which we are compelled to face in our varied tasks of social service. If we did that only we should stand on a platform as loose-jointed, miscellaneous and inconsistent as that of the late lamented Progressive Party, a platform made up of every bit of drift wood that floated down the stream of social reform, composed as was the creed of a new sect founded by a genial lady who asked each new member to contribute some individual article of belief to the common confession of faith.

Nay, but it is high time that the Christian Church and her ministry, as the official interpreters of religion, should face the whole fundamental and paramount question of the inequitable distribution of production, the tap root and primal source of all the evils, wrongs, moral perils and characteristic sins of wanton and swollen wealth and despairing and abandoned poverty. We are bound to face that question. The highroad of human progress along

which we must travel with the very advance of civilisation (unless we are to be left behind as an anachronism), that high-road of common progress leads directly up to that question, as well as every by-path of charity and social service. The whole world is beginning consciously to face the question. And religion, as the official conscience of the world, must make up its mind on this question and speak out that mind bravely and wisely. It must interpret the situation morally and ethically or else abandon its mission.

There is an easy and superficial philosophy which readily accounts for the phenomena of wealth and poverty as always the inevitable issues and consequences of certain courses of conduct, moral and immoral. That philosophy is set forth in certain of the Psalms and throughout the Book of Proverbs in strong contrasts. Black and white are the only colours used. There are no shades or neutral tints in the picture. Is a man industrious, virtuous and God-fearing? "Riches and plenteousness shall be in his house." Is a man a sluggard, lazy, thriftless, extravagant, drunken and dissolute? "Poverty and want are his certain lot." To these causes modern science has added inherited inefficiency and deficiency.

The orthodox economist and the conventional religionist have hitherto rested content with this superficial and comfortable philosophy. All wealth is the fruit of the rather low and self-regarding

virtues of industry, frugality, economy, foresight and prudence. And all poverty is the result of the negative vices of lazyness and thriftlessness or the positive vices of extravagance, intemperance and debauchery, or else of inherited disabilities.

There is, of course, large truth in that philosophy. There is much wealth that is earned by these prudential virtues and much poverty that is also "earned" by the opposite vices. But that is not a complete solution of the problem. The palpable facts of experience rise up and cry out against the smugness and falsity of such a philosophy.

There is much, vastly much, of both wealth and poverty that never in any age could be so accounted for, and the consciousness of that fact grows increasingly acute in our modern economic world. Even Job saw that problem and brooded in perplexity over it. The preacher in Ecclesiastes saw it and fell into cynicism, if not pessimism. The pious religionist attributed this mystery to "the inscrutable decrees of an all-wise Providence," as we used to attribute typhoid fever and malaria until science taught us to look to our drinking-water and "consider the mosquito."

But the thinking man of to-day, under the guidance of a progressive science and an enlightened religion, has passed through all these moods of placid content, perplexity, cynicism and that lazy faith which slanders God, and arrived at the conclusion that something is wrong, fundamentally and

essentially wrong with our economic and industrial system or there could be no such glaring inequities in the distribution of the fruits of labour. Most evidently they are not always given to the virtuous and denied to the vicious. The imbecile or idle and dissolute heir of a great fortune has "riches and plenteousness in his house." The dishonest and unscrupulous often heap up great possessions. While the intelligent, industrious, frugal and temperate often spend their lives in pinching poverty. The drones of the industrial hive are often fattened while the workers starve.

The foundations of a great fortune may be laid in superior industry, efficiency, foresight and thrift but the vast proportions of the superstructure are generally built up by other means. The brigand may earn and save until he can buy his club or pistol. After that he simply extorts the wealth of others without labour save that incidental to the profession of brigandage. Even so many a captain of high finance to-day serves until he acquires enough power to command certain special privileges, now allowed him by law and custom as the club and pistol once were similarly allowed to the brigand, soon, we hope, to be disallowed and abolished by law and custom as the pistol and club have been in all civilised countries. Armed with these special privileges, he can henceforth appropriate the commonwealth and exploit the earnings of others in arithmetical and even geometrical

progression. He needs neither to labour nor to save. He "sows not nor reaps" and yet he "gathers into barns and fares sumptuously every day" and even "Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like" unto him. Often the less he serves the public weal, yea, the more he disserves and undermines the common welfare, the larger his accumulations. In most of our swollen fortunes, no equation can possibly be established between possession and service rendered to or benefit conferred upon society. A story of John Spargo's illustrates aptly my point.

Two men were tramping a hot, hilly and dusty road in Wales one sultry summer day. They stopped at a wayside pump to slake their parched throats. But pump as vigorously as they would, only a few drops dribbled from the spout. It took them twenty minutes to get a beggarly half pint of water. They went forthwith to the farmer who owned the pump and said, "Farmer Jones, there is something the matter with that pump of yours. We worked it for nearly half an hour and got only a half-pint of water." "Oh, no," the farmer complacently replied, "that pump is all right. There is a secret pipe, leading to a reservoir in my house. And while you were getting half a pint for yourselves, you pumped fifty gallons into my reservoir."

There is written the parable of our inequitable distribution of wealth with all its attendant evils.

"The secret pipe" is the special privilege of one sort or another which diverts the common wealth from society and the production of the toiler from the producer, into the coffers of the idle, the parasitic and the predatory. Consequently we have large unearned wealth on the one side and overwhelming, crushing unearned poverty on the other, and both kill the souls of men and hinder the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Must not religion, the Church, the ministry, face these palpable facts? Must they not have something to say about them, some message to deliver in the situation, some burden of the Lord laid upon them such as the prophets of old felt when they faced like problems? It may not be and is not the business of religion to discover just what "the secret pipe" is and how it may be abolished. That is the business of experts, economists, reformers, legislators and the like. But it is her business to denounce the moral iniquity, the palpable injustice of an economic and industrial system which allows "the secret pipe," the special privilege. It is her business to arouse the public conscience against it.

If Paul could say, "If a man will not work; neither shall he eat," can we not preach, "If a man will not earn, neither shall he have"? "If he will not serve, neither shall he possess and enjoy"? Can we not, as ambassadors of God, messengers of Christ, prophets of religion, stand at least for this proposition, that wealth shall mean worth of some

sort, that it shall stand always as an equivalent of service rendered to or benefit conferred upon society? Is not that a moral and therefore a religious axiom which it is our duty to proclaim from the house tops to-day?

In this main aspect of the social problem, as in all its side issues with which our charity, philanthropy and social service bring us into contact, we must quit pottering with symptoms and face causes. We must be no longer content with our superficialities but become true radicals.

We need a new version and application of the parable of the Good Samaritan. We have long enough been pouring oil and wine into the wounds of the beaten and robbed traveller on the Jericho road. It is high time we rose up and lent a hand to clear that road of thieves and robbers.

We began with charity in the form of alms giving. We have gone on to the larger and better charity of social service or self-giving. The next step which we must take if we are true to our mission and commission, if we follow faithfully the path in which we have been led by God,— the next step is into the battlefield where the fight goes on for Social Justice.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRUE RADICALISM

I HAVE tried to show that the Christian minister in his treatment of the social problem, must go beyond charity into justice, beneath symptoms into causes. He must be the true radical in the best sense of the word.

But what is "true radicalism" in this matter?

Many radical programmes, economic, industrial and social, offer themselves. Many panaceas for our social ills are presented clamorously from all sides. Is it the minister's duty, after careful study, thorough investigation and mature deliberation, to decide which of these is right and practicable, and then adopt it as a part of his message, put the imprimatur of the Church upon it and deliver it as her authoritative version of the gospel of social justice? Is he to proclaim this, that or the other scheme of economic reform as the only inspired and divinely appointed ground plan of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth?

There are some ministers of the Christian Church, earnest and devoted servants of God and man, who have arrived at just this conclusion. And we have

Single-tax Churches, Labour Churches, Christian Socialist Churches and the like. These men have often consecrated themselves to their causes with all the zeal of mediæval crusaders or Hebrew prophets. They preach their particular programmes of economic and social reform as an integral part, if not the very essence, of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which is committed to them as "stewards of the mysteries of God." In this warfare they "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ." They have taken up the cross to follow the Master along this particular path in which, they believe, He leads them. No sacrifice is too great for their devotion. They give up salaries, emoluments, ease, comforts, social position and esteem and all hope of preferment or advancement in the Christian Church. They gladly suffer themselves practically to be branded and ostracised, not only by a plutocratic society but by the orthodox, conventional and also somewhat plutocratic Church.

Now I have the utmost admiration for the spirit that inspires such men. All honour to them for their courage, their loyalty to their convictions, cost what it may, their consuming passion for social righteousness and justice. They put to shame the indifference, blindness, ay, the moral cowardice of many a sleek and comfortable parson who holds fast a fat living and sedulously cultivates his prospects of advancement in the Church by preaching moral platitudes and technical pieties which can neither offend

nor interest any one. They put to shame the superficial optimism of those "prophets of smooth things" who "heal the wounds of God's people slightly, crying, peace, peace, where there is no peace" and who consequently often hold the chief offices in the Kingdom. They put to shame also the timorousness and lukewarmness of the average minister in such matters.

But much as I admire the spirit that inspires these men, their judgment seems to me utterly mistaken. They are true-hearted but wrong-headed. They have missed the mark. They have misinterpreted the very spirit and essence of the Gospel. They have misapprehended the real function of the ministry. Above all they have failed to grasp the unvarying method of Christ in dealing with all such questions.

And certain unfortunate consequences are apt to follow upon such mistaken courses. The advocates of these particular methods of social reform are apt to narrow the whole Gospel to their special programme. It becomes to them what His "plan of salvation" was to the old-fashioned evangelical. It is the test of orthodoxy and even of salvation. Whoever does not accept it has practically forfeited his right to the name Christian. For, of course, in the reformer's view, Jesus was a Single-taxer or a Socialist or this, that or the other. And he who does not adopt the plan of Christ, as much as he who "has not the spirit of Christ,— is none of His." The

Christian social reformer, who identifies the gospel with his economic programme becomes sectarian, narrow, bigotted and intolerant. He sometimes loses the broad charity and sweet reasonableness of the Christian spirit. He often denounces indiscriminately all who differ from Him. He can see no concern or passion for social righteousness and justice in any who may choose a different path to the one goal. He is apt to attribute base and unworthy motives to their best and most sincere words and acts. His whole vision becomes distorted.

And there sometimes results a disproportionate emphasis upon relative moral and spiritual values, a relaxing grasp upon "the things unseen and eternal," a gradual blurring and dimming of the soul's vision, a growing materialism and in the end an utter loss of religious faith. Sometimes the process ends in a complete pessimism. And the champion of a particular programme degenerates from a prophet of God and a messenger of the Word into a common scold.

Also I have noted a more or less characteristic division of ethics and morals between the social reformer who champions special programmes and the ordinary Christian, even though an individualist. The latter is apt to exhibit more of the personal virtues,— gentleness, moderation, kindliness, and charity, often even a higher and more delicate sensitiveness as to honour and sometimes common honesty, while he is frequently indifferent or blind to

the larger aspects of social ethics and righteousness. The former, the champion of particular programmes, on fire with his passion for economic justice, is apt to be less of a Christian gentleman and therefore harder to live with.

This fact, in itself, would show a partial gospel on both sides. For the gospel of Christ is big enough to hold all ethics in its grasp, personal or individual, as well as social. In its full, wholesome and proportionate interpretation and application, it stands for both a complete personal character and a complete social righteousness. Even judged by the rule, "by their fruits ye shall know them," they are condemned who identify the gospel of Christ either wholly or in part with particular programmes of economic or social reform.

What shall we do then? Are we to adopt no consistent radical programme but just to take disconnected bits and fragments from various programmes to make our platform, after the fashion of the quack who mingles all specifics indicated by the symptoms of various diseases to produce a panacea for them all? Or are we driven finally to the lame and impotent conclusion that the Christian minister has nothing to do with any radical cures for social wrongs? Are we to fall back at last on the position we have renounced and denounced, namely that the preacher of the Gospel is to deal only with the mysteries of metaphysical theology, the "plan of salvation," and the communion of the individual

soul with God, with a limited ethic of ecclesiastical good form, technical pieties and the minor moralities of purely personal behaviour?

By no means. My answer would be that the Christian minister is to go far more deeply into this matter of social justice than the social or economic reformer goes, more deeply than the Single-taxer or Socialist. He is to strike straight down into the heart and root of the whole matter, as Jesus did. He is to be the true radical after the example of his Master, as only he can be.

The reformers are concerned, as their name indicates, with re-forms only, that is, with changes in the forms, the outward structure, institutions, laws and customs which shape society externally. They approach the question from without. They hope to secure righteousness and justice by changes in the social environment.

The Christian ministry and the Christian Church, after the example of their Master and Founder, are not content with reformations, however far-reaching and radical. They seek the regeneration of society. They would effect a change of heart in the body social and politic. They would inspire society with a new spirit. They approach the problem from within. They deal with the inward and informing spirit of society, not with its outward forms.

Consequently the Christian minister must deal primarily with principles, while the reformer deals

chiefly with policies. The one inspires motives, the other plans methods. Policies and programmes, methods and modes of social, industrial and economic adjustment, reform and reconstruction,—these are matters of judgment, not of conscience. They are the machinery whereby the principles of social justice and righteousness are to be applied to the remedying of wrong and inequitable conditions. The planning, constructing and running of such machinery are the business of experts in the fields of economics, industry, sociology and statecraft. Such machinery is necessary, but variable, constantly to be adjusted to the changing needs of the times, the peoples and the environments which require reform. No man should venture into that field who has not acquired the necessary knowledge and skill by long and patient study, investigation, training and experience. And the preacher is not likely to have the time or mind for such careful preparation. Nor is he called thereto. That is not the task laid upon him by his vocation. He generally makes a botch and muddle of things when he meddles with practical politics or reforms.

But the principles and motives of justice and righteousness are the same "yesterday, to-day and forever." And they make their direct appeal to the conscience. They need not be argued or proved by logic. Like light, moral truth is visible by its own radiance and is not to be proved by the shadow it casts. And the business of the prophet of God, the

messenger of the Word, is with such eternal and self-evident truths. The language of the advocate of any proposed programme of economic or social reform is this, "By the demonstration of the reasonableness and efficiency of my plan, I commend myself to every man's judgment in the light of the facts." But the language of the prophet and messenger of God is this, "By the manifestation of the truth I commend myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

Religion deals with the essential and the eternal, the universal and unchanging principles and motives of righteousness and justice. Social and economic reforms deal with the accidental and the temporal, the methods and modes of application of those principles and motives.

Religion must come first and always does come first in any great movement towards the realisation of the ideal society. It must convict the common conscience, the public mind, of the sin of social injustice and unrighteousness before the first step can be taken. It must inspire the passion for justice, create the "hunger and thirst after righteousness" to motive all effort. It must supply the moral dynamic, get up the moral steam, and then leave the experts to devise the machinery to apply that moral force to our social needs and service.

It has always been so. I believe our current socialism is wrong in the over-emphasis it puts upon its doctrine of economic determinism. Economic pres-

sure may be the *occasion* that reveals the wrong and arouses the conscience. But that conscience itself, that innate, God-implanted hatred of wrong and injustice and aspiration after righteousness, is ever the final *cause* of all great movements of reform. Socialism itself is essentially religious in its inspiring spirit, however obstinately and blindly some socialists try to interpret its philosophy into purely materialistic terms.

Here in this innermost region of the essential and eternal, this region of principle and motive, this realm of the conscience, lies the field of the ministry in the great warfare for social righteousness. Hence I say that we can be, if we will, the true radicals, dealing more profoundly and in the end effectively with the essential problems than any mere reformer. In a sense our task is easier than that of the reformer. For the appeal to the conscience never changes from age to age or in whatever varying circumstances it may be made. And it practically always hits the mark. Men will generally agree with surprising unanimity as to the essential principles of righteousness and justice. But they will disagree with surprising diversity of opinion as to the methods and means of the application of those principles.

And yet in another aspect our task is more perilous and requires a higher degree of moral courage, if that task be fully appreciated and seriously undertaken. The appeal to conscience is more pro-

vocative of anger, hostility, even persecution, than the appeal to the practical reason. Men will listen with calmness and indifference to an academic discussion of social and economic programmes. But the direct appeal which, like the touch of a live coal, arouses a comfortably dormant conscience to keen and agonising sensitiveness, often provokes to fury.

For understand me, I am not trying to evade the issue or avoid responsibility for the ministry. I am not pleading for the preaching of smooth things, vague generalities and abstractions which touch no practical or personal issue and so arouse no antagonism. I do not mean that the preacher should sum up his social message in such vague platitudes as "Be good, be honest, be just, merciful and kindly." Nay, but I am pleading for such a plain and direct delivery of the essential gospel of public righteousness and social justice as shall cut deep into the common and the individual conscience and may cost much to him that has the courage and faithfulness to deliver it.

The ancient antithesis is still true and valid, "The friendship of the world is enmity against God." And the converse is also true "The friendship of God is enmity with the world." Our Lord's stern denuniciations need to be taken much to heart by many of our "popular preachers and eminent divines." "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you, for so did their fathers of

the false prophets." The reason why our conventional religion has become so respectable and even fashionable, the reason why many of our ministries are so comfortable and peaceful, our salaries and positions secure, the reason why "wealthy malefactors" sometimes occupy the front pews in our Churches, compliment our sermons and bestow their largesse upon our missions, charities and ourselves,— may be partly because the world, through these Christian centuries, has been brought into more friendly relations with God and into closer conformity to His will. But I doubt not that, if there were a clearer moral vision and a larger moral courage in the average preacher, if there were more of the spirit of Amos and Hosea, John the Baptist, the apostles and above all the Christ in our preaching, we might have more of a taste of the bitter antagonisms and even persecution which they invariably encountered. The message of God has not yet lost its edge or its fire when faithfully delivered. Suppose the preachers of Pittsburgh had denounced as unchristian and intolerable the inhuman conditions in the great iron and steel industries in that city as revealed by the Pittsburgh survey; suppose the preachers of Pennsylvania and the Southland should "prophesy" against the iniquities and cruelties of child labour in the coal mines and the cotton and silk mills and glass industries; do you suppose nothing unusual would happen in the churches in those regions? And such preaching is

a part of " the burden of the Lord " laid upon us as prophets of the Most High and Messengers of Christ.

Only in the delivery of our message, let us beware of a mistake very commonly made by zealous but superficial preachers and also reformers. In attacking such evils let us recognise the guilt of them as often not so much personal and individual as social. It is a " a short and easy " method to pick out a few outstanding figures in the financial and industrial worlds, whether these figures be persons or corporations, label them as " wealthy malefactors " or " bad trusts," and then set them up as lightning rods to catch all the righteous indignation with which an aroused public mind is charged, while the rest of us congratulate ourselves upon our immunity.

As a matter of fact, these evils permeate the whole economic, industrial and financial system. No one of us can live under that system, particularly no one of us can do business under that system, without being involved in that evil and sharing to some extent in that sin. If child labour or a standard of wages below the level of decent living prevails in any business, or if it be built on " special privilege," —then often whoever is in that business must carry it on under those conditions or else get out of the business. Ordinarily no one individual business man and no particular group can free themselves from that entanglement and stand aloof in moral independence. Such an attempt would generally

result in failure. There may be occasionally exceptional individuals, firms or corporations, strong enough to stand alone because they are freed by peculiar circumstances from the fierce pressure of competition. But the ordinary individual or corporation which should attempt to stand aloof and be independent and establish standards much higher than those prevailing in their particular trade, would be crushed by unequal competition. Many a successful captain of industry to-day feels deeply the injustice of the present system but does not see the way out. Perhaps if he were possessed by the spirit of Christ, he would take the risk of crucifixion for the larger good.

The big men and groups are guilty in so far as they have deliberately built up the evil systems and methods and established the low moral standards and defend them. But the little men and groups are proportionately guilty so far as they profit by the same systems and practice and use the same methods to the extent of their smaller power and ability, as most of them do. And we are all responsible, so far as by our moral obtuseness we fail to see the evil, and all guilty, so far as by our moral lethargy and cowardice we fail to attack and destroy it. Connivance is a form of participation. And the sins of omission rank with the sins of commission.

Therefore in all our "social" preaching, whether in the pulpit or on the stump, let us recognise such

sins and evils as not purely personal or individual but as largely social. We need a conviction of the *common* conscience of *common* sin and the inspiration of the *common* will to *common* action.

But to come back more closely to my subject. Perhaps I can illustrate more clearly the distinction I am trying to make between policies and programmes, methods and modes, means and machinery, the legitimate sphere of the social and economic reformer on the one side and, on the other, the principles, motives and ends of social righteousness and justice, the true field of the prophet of God and the minister of Christ,— perhaps I may make that distinction a little clearer, if I may be pardoned one or two allusions.

I am a "root and branch" Single Taxer. I believe heart and soul in the social and economic philosophy of Henry George. That is the particular policy, method and means of social and economic justice which I personally believe to be most rational and in the end effective. And I take every opportunity offered by the public press and platform to recommend and propagate, according to the best of my ability, this particular programme of social righteousness. That is my privilege and duty as a man and a citizen and also as one who has made some slight study of social and economic questions.

But I have never preached Single Tax from any Christian pulpit and never shall. There I stand

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as a "steward of the mysteries of God," a prophet of the Word, a messenger and ambassador of Christ. I do not find that the Single Tax or any other particular economic programme or social philosophy is a part of the Gospel and I will not attempt to inject it into the gospel. If I did, I should alienate many who are just as sensitive to social wrongs and just as passionate for social righteousness as I am. There is my socialist brother in one pew, my "philosophic anarchist" friend in another, and some devoted, self-sacrificing and consecrated "opportunist" in another, all having the common cause at heart as much as I have. I dare not try to force my particular method or mode upon any of them so long as we all agree in our devotion to the one end. In the pulpit I must deal, not with the accidental modes and methods of reform, but with the essential principles and motives of righteousness and justice.

But I have always tried in my pulpit to arouse and sensitise the conscience of the indifferent to some sense of the prevailing unrighteousness of our present social and economic conditions and inspire their hearts with a passion for social justice. And then I have tried to leave each one who may have received my message utterly free to choose his own way of dealing with the problem so presented, whether by radical methods such as the Single Tax and Socialism, or by the more moderate and conservative programmes of gradual amelioration

through the application of specific reforms and remedies to meet specific symptoms of our social disease.

An incident may be pertinent. I was once speaking in Ford Hall, Boston, on the relation of the Church to social righteousness. The audience was composed, as it always is, of reformers of every shade of belief. Representatives of every type were there, from the philosophic anarchist in the gallery to the conservative opportunist on the platform. I asked the rhetorical question, "Shall the Church adopt 'Das Kapital' as her Bible and preach Marxism as her message?" Instantly there was deafening applause from all over the house. It was some time before I could proceed. "Or," I said next, "shall she take Henry George as her Messiah and 'Progress and Poverty' as her gospel?" There was quite a respectable response from many quarters, applause which went straight to my heart as a "root and branch" Single Taxer. "Or," I continued, "shall she follow the gentle Tolstoi and preach philosophic anarchy?" There was scattered hand-clapping from the corners of the gallery. "Or," I concluded, turning to the highly "respectable cranks" upon the platform, "shall she be content with commending moderate specific reforms to meet needs as they develop?" And there were nods and smiles of approval from the "ladies and gentlemen" on the stage. "Don't you see, brothers," I added, "that you have here and now answered the question, 'What shall the Church do in this

warfare for social righteousness'? If Ford Hall should commit itself to a radically and technically socialistic platform, fully half of this audience would be shut out of your gatherings. If Ford Hall should adopt the Single Tax as her shibboleth, three-fourths at least would be turned away. If you should take up philosophic anarchy, you would have only the few idealists in the corners of the galleries. And if you should limit yourselves to a conservative opportunism, you would have only these emimently respectable cranks on the platform. But now you all unite on the broad basis of social justice and righteousness. You come here week by week to have your consciences quickened, your hearts stirred, your wills strengthened and your courage braced for the great common warfare in which you are all alike engaged. And then you go out, each to follow the particular banner of economic method which appeals to him most. So you keep your broad and inclusive spirit. Now the Christian Church must be at least as comprehensive and catholic as Ford Hall."

This incident seems to me to illustrate clearly my contention as to the position of the Church in this great conflict. And it also suggests a most useful and much needed function she may serve. Of that function I hope to speak in my last chapter.

Let us turn in conclusion to the New Testament for the final illustration of the method I am trying

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e, for example, Jesus' relation to democracy,
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stituting principle of "the Kingdom of God"
the ideal society. Jesus lived in a world rigidly
ratified by class and race consciousness. Men
were rated and classified, not according to the
worth of their manhood, but according to the acci-
dents of race and caste, occupation, possession and
position in an artificial society.

Yet He organised no "democratic party." He advocated no specific changes in the outward forms of government in Church or state. He led no movement of the disinherited masses against the classes who held all the monopolies of privilege, power and possession.

The pressure upon Him to do just these things, to interpret the functions of His Messiahship into these terms of particular reform and even of political revolt, was persistent and tremendous. That was the popular demand, especially in Galilee, His native province, where Zealotism permeated the very atmosphere. And Zealotism conceived its mission as the preparing of the way for a political Messiah by political agitation and insurrection. That was one of the temptations of the Wilderness and of His whole life.

Had He yielded and conformed to the popular demand and expectation, His effect on the history of the world would have been as transient as the bubbles on the surface of disturbed water and His name no more potent to-day than that of Judas or Theudas of Galilee.

But yet no thoughtful student can maintain that He was either indifferent to the social problem of His day or neglectful of it. He passed over its superficial symptoms but He went straight to its roots. He taught steadily the equal and inestimable value of every human soul in the eyes of God. He refused to treat or estimate any man according

to the accidents of position or possession, of race or class, but only according to the essence of his humanity and the potential worth of his manhood. He proclaimed the universal brotherhood of mankind under the universal Fatherhood of God. He set the despised but sincere and humble Publican above the proud Pharisee, and the heretical, hated but merciful Samaritan above the heartless ecclesiastic of orthodox religion. He sought out the outcasts of both Church and society and gave them His special sympathy and attention. He gave definite utterance to the very formative principles and essential spirit of all democracy when He said "The Kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them and their great ones are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so. But he that is greatest among you, let him be as he that is younger and he that is chief as he that doth serve; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

In these words He declared the Kingdom of God to be a democracy. For this is the constitutive principle of all democracy,— the very antipodes of the conception of government which prevailed in all that ancient world and which underlies all tyrannies, imperialisms, aristocracies or "boss-rules" anywhen and anywhere. The ruler, in the aristocratic conception, is Lord, Sovereign and Master and the citizen is the subject and servant of his will. The administrator and executive, in the

democratic conception of the state, is the servant of the will and minister to the welfare of the sovereign people. That is the conception which pervades the whole teaching of Jesus.

This pervading spirit of democracy in Christ's utterances attacks with a quiet, almost ironical, humour, even the pompous dignities and titles in which aristocracies and hierarchies of all sorts, political, social or ecclesiastical, love to array themselves. "Be ye not called Rabbi, for One is your Master even Christ. And call no man your father on earth, for One is your Father which is in heaven and all ye are brethren. Neither be ye called master, for One is your Master even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant and whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Could any words better express the characteristic mind and temper, the inspiring spirit of the most essential and even radical democracy? And such utterances are but out-croppings of the all pervading mind of Jesus' teaching.

There is enough social dynamite in such teachings, yes, in the Sermon on the Mount alone, to blow to bits all the tyrannies and oppressions, political, ecclesiastical, economic and social, the world has ever known. And every form of despotism which has come into contact with this teaching of Jesus has always sensed this "social dynamite" of His gospel, feared it and tried to suppress it. The

Jewish hierarchy felt it, called Jesus a demagogue, an agitator, "a stirrer up of the people" and, for that very reason, crucified Him. Imperial Rome, tolerant of all religions which did not "meddle with politics" but hypersensitive to anything that threatened the stability of her iron order and authority, discerned the social danger in this new religion and tried to suppress it by persecution and that too under her best emperors. It is so to-day. The censors of the former Turkish and Russian régimes blotted out the utterances I have quoted and others like them from the copies of the New Testament circulated among their peoples. But no censor can eliminate the spirit of human brotherhood and essential democracy from the Gospel of Christ any more than he can eliminate the chemical rays from the common sunshine. And wherever that gospel has gone in its simple and unadulterated original form, there it has carried this powerful and pervasive leaven of true democracy. It has formed the characteristic mind and temper of the modern western world. It has inspired and practically established all the democracies of modern Christendom whether under the forms of constitutional and limited monarchies as in England or republics as in the United States. However imperfect as yet their realisations of the ideals of democracy may be, yet whatever attainment they have achieved in that direction is distinctly and directly traceable to the teachings of Jesus. Outside

the scope of His gospel, democracy in any form is practically unknown. Through the indirect influence of Christian colleges and Christian missions, the democratic movement, both in politics and society, is springing up in Turkey, Persia and China. It may have its ebbs and flows but the tide has set in and the power that evokes and governs that tide is the Gospel of Jesus.

Strange, is it not? Here is a purely spiritual teaching which abjures all external means, which never meddles with mere outward forms and therefore does not sponsor specific re-forms, which has no particular economic or political programme or policy, which deals only with moral and spiritual principles and motives. And yet every political, ecclesiastical or social tyranny or even aristocracy instinctively fears it and tries to suppress it. And in its subtle and pervasive atmosphere all forms of human oppression gradually crumble into dust.

That is what I mean when I say that Jesus is the most radical and effective democrat the world has ever known. He has accomplished more and is accomplishing more by His "view from above and approach from within," His exclusive dealings with principles and motives, than any reformer and revolutionist has ever been able to accomplish by his view from below and approach from without, by his direct dealing with environments and institutions.

Why, then, it may be pertinently asked, does

not our current Christianity to-day accomplish more in the realm of economic and industrial democracy, as the Christianity of the Christ has ever been so effective in the realms of political democracy? That is our crucial need to-day, the establishment of industrial and economic democracy. Political democracy is but an approach and means to that end, largely ineffective for human justice, freedom or righteousness until that end be attained. We now have political democracy and industrial and economic feudalism side by side. And political democracy is abortive and ineffectual unless it issue in economic and industrial democracy. And our current, conventional religion seems so impotent and inefficient in securing that end, indeed so indifferent to it. Why is it so? My answer would be "because the teaching and gospel of Jesus have been largely denatured in our common interpretation and preaching."

For a long time political democracy was held back because a hierarchical Church had denatured the original gospel. It had interpreted Jesus' ideal of the Kingdom of God as a mere ecclesiastical organisation and converted His great mission of saving the world into the mission of saving souls by a process of material magic, that is, a process whereby, through a machinery of sacraments and rites, the individual was assured of escape from hell and admission to heavenly bliss in a realm beyond the skies. The Reformation set free to a degree the

"social dynamic" of the gospel and modern political democracy is largely the result. But still the gospel is in great measure denatured. In our popular interpretations of it the vision of the Kingdom of God on earth, the saving of the world, an ideal society on terrestrial ground, has been for the most part lost and the salvation of the individual soul is still substituted therefor. That salvation is to be attained in our current Protestantism, not by the material magic of rites and sacraments, to be sure, but by the formal magic of "plans of salvation," "schemes of redemption," a stereotyped process of emotionalism called conversion; or else the salvation of the world has been narrowed down to the salvation of the individual into the little righteousness of purely personal graces and virtues.

But the new and yet old vision is dawning once more upon many seers. We are beginning to see again the real social implications and emphases of Jesus' teachings. And when we preach again in some measure as Jesus preached, a mighty force of social dynamic will be set free in our modern world. "The gospel of the Kingdom" will again be proclaimed, and that gospel will inspire anew the attack on ancient tyrannies and oppressions and give tremendous impulse and sustaining power to all movements for industrial freedom, economic democracy and social justice.

Then and then only shall we fulfil our complete mission as ambassadors of Christ, interpreters of

His message and preachers of His Word. Therefore while we hand over to the experts in the various fields the mechanism of reform, the devising of methods and means, policies and programmes,—let us, as the ministers of religion and the representatives of the Christ, so convict the common conscience of the intolerable sins inherent in the whole unjust system now prevailing and so fire the common heart with the passion for justice and righteousness, that we shall furnish the moral dynamic for every right reform and every noble effort towards the ideal society. Let us leave to the reformers the "if and how of the practical reason" while we as prophets of the Most High stress the "must and ought of the categorical imperative." So shall we prove the real radicals in this mighty movement after the pattern and example of our Master, the great radical of all the ages.

CHAPTER V

SOME PRACTICAL AGENDA

IN the first four chapters we have considered certain general principles underlying this whole subject of the minister's relation to the social problem. In this final chapter I would suggest certain practical agenda, or "things to be done,"— items in a programme or policy for such as may be alive to their obligation, as ministers of Christ, to make some social applications of their message and mission.

Of course each must decide upon his own course. His own peculiar environment and sphere will suggest his own peculiar opportunities. His own personal point of view and his own special training will suggest his methods and message. I can throw out only a few general, random and miscellaneous hints.

There are many suggestions along this line of the minister's duty and function in this matter,— some wise, some otherwise,— made by those more or less familiar with the subject. There have been many experiments tried.

I. The minister may hold himself in readiness to assist in the settlement of specific quarrels between

divergent social interests. He may, if called on to do so, serve on boards of arbitration in cases of industrial disputes between employees and employers. He may aid in settling strikes and lock-outs, adjusting claims as to fair wages, hours and conditions of labour, etc.

That is good and useful social service. It is Christian and religious work also, as Christian and religious as preaching the gospel or conducting prayer-meetings. For we are all sent in the name of Christ to act as "peace-makers" and every one ordained to the priesthood or consecrated to the Episcopate takes a vow "to maintain and set forward as much as lieth in him, quietness, peace and love among all Christian people."

But the obligation to render such service in industrial disputes and the value of it depend wholly upon the personality of the particular minister, his qualifications for the specific task, his knowledge, skill, training, experience, temper of mind, his standing and influence with both bodies of disputants and in the general community. A man is called to such tasks by his abilities and his character and also by the will and choice of those concerned,—not by his profession or vocation. It is a matter of personality, not of office. Now and then there is to be found a Christian minister who is eminently and specially fitted for such delicate and important service. And when he is found, he will be called, as were Cardinal Manning in London and Bishop

Potter in New York. But let no little priestlet or parsonet thrust himself unbidden into such a position or claim it as a right and prerogative of his profession and vocation. Christ refused to act as an arbiter and judge in a certain dispute. And He does not commission us for that office.

Ordinarily the minister is peculiarly unqualified to act in such capacities. His studies and occupations do not tend that way. He is naturally inexpert and inexperienced in the complicated affairs of the business and industrial worlds. And when he does thrust himself unbidden into such junctures, he generally loses dignity and influence and earns only ridicule and contempt from both sides of the quarrel for himself, for his vocation and perhaps for religion. Such was the unfortunate fate, I understand, of a company of clergymen who, in a certain large city, offered themselves as arbitrators in a street car strike. I do not find it written anywhere that "it appertaineth to the office of Bishop, Priest or Deacon" to serve as judges in such matters.

Moreover such service, while immediately useful, is rarely permanently valuable. It may settle a particular quarrel but it seldom touches any of the root causes of the perennial strife or establishes any permanent principles upon which any hope of permanent industrial peace may be founded. It is like ordinary charity, the filling of the widow's cruse which is empty next day, instead of "preventing the widow" or at least making her self-supporting. It

is too superficial. The work of the ministry in this field must be more truly radical.

II. The minister may throw himself actively into movements to push specific industrial, political and social reforms, either in the securing of new legislation or the enforcement of law already existing. So may any other public spirited citizen. What efforts in these directions are wise is a matter of judgment. It is social engineering, social mechanics. It belongs to the sphere of the "practical reason," the "if and how," not to the sphere of the conscience, the "must and ought of the categorical imperative." It is mechanics and not dynamics and as such it is not the minister's peculiar field. There is danger in it for the ministry, danger of absorption in the mere details of social, political and industrial reforms and reconstruction to the neglect of the higher and more spiritual functions of his ministry, the danger lest he "leave the Word of God to serve tables." That is one of the subtlest and most fatal temptations that beset the ministry in these days of strenuous and distracted living and over-multiplied activities. The deepest and most essential function of the ministry is inspiration, not administration.

III. There is a new and most attractive, if not seductive, field which has opened to the ministry lately. Many large industries, partly under the pressure of the labour problem, partly under the inspiration of the new social conscience, are develop-

ing welfare work on a large scale. When such work is connected with profit-sharing, it touches more or less closely the fundamental issues of social justice but for the most part it is simply social service on a large scale. Naturally in the present feudal organisation of our industries, welfare work partakes more or less of the nature of parental and benevolent tyranny. But here and there it is being interpreted gradually into the terms of industrial and economic democracy, the true goal of the modern social movement. Now and then the heads of such industries turn to the Christian ministers, from whom perhaps they received their original inspiration for such ventures, for the management and administration of their welfare departments. Occasionally, with true instinct, they look to the minister for something more, something better, deeper and more essential than mere administration and management.

A great reform mayor of a large city once said to me, "I am going to appoint my pastor as head of the department of charities and correction. What do you think of my choice?" I answered, "He has the heart for the work, whether he has the head or not, the business and executive ability, I do not know." The prompt reply came, "We shall have business ability to spare about this city hall. We will provide him subordinates who will take care of all administrative details. What I want at the head of that department is a man to

whom those poor hulks in the alms-house and infirmary and even those wrecks in the workhouse shall be, not simply cases, number one, two and three, but human beings." That is, the mayor was seeking the Christian attitude, the Christian point of view, the Christian estimate of human values, in a word, the Christ-spirit, for the work of charities and correction and he looked for that spirit naturally in the Christian ministry.

Again the head of a great industry was seeking a manager for his welfare work, probably the most extensive work of the kind in our industrial world. Long lists of candidates, recommended by the sociological departments of universities, charity-organisation societies and social experts of every sort, were examined and rejected. The captain of industry turned at last to his own pastor, saying, "We want something more than scientific management. We want the vision, the spirit which you have given us and which you can still give us."

It seems to me that in both these cases the Christian minister was asked to perform a function which is legitimate to his vocation. It is a part of his "radical" mission, to supply vision, motive, inspiration, dynamic, not simply to run machinery. Such work is pastoral work on a large scale.

And yet this is a call that can, by the very nature of the case, come only to the very few who are fitted to answer it. And moreover there is a distinct narrowing and lowering of the essential function of

the ministry in accepting such work. It is something like deserting the power-house to run one lathe in the factory.

But all these methods of dealing with the social problem are avocations for the minister, they do not belong to his vocation. They are by-paths into fields of special service; they do not lie along the main road of his legitimate and normal calling. They belong to the few qualified and called, not to all.

What are some of the practical opportunities and ways of fulfilling his obligation to preach and apply the social gospel that lie open to the ordinary minister in the pursuit of his legitimate vocation?

The first which naturally suggests itself is the work of the institutional Church, that most popular modern form of Christian activity and Church organisation. What shall we say of it? Much of it is excellent beyond praise. As mercy "blesses both him that gives and him that takes," so such service enriches both those that minister it and those to whom it is ministered. It brings light and tone and colour into many dark, monotonous and dreary lives. It brings recreation into lives wearied and exhausted by humdrum and unbroken labour. It gives outlook and aspiration to narrow and despairing souls. It opens opportunity to the dispossessed. It interprets and commends religion in practical, tangible and attractive form to those who perhaps were repelled by the unintelligible theologies and the practical aloof-

ness of its conventional presentation. It makes the love of God and the spirit of Christ real in human service. And it gives expression to the faith and a practical outlet to the zeal of Christian believers, the members of the Church. The institutional Church is a laboratory of applied Christianity. It grounds the wire and completes the circuit and so applies to useful service a faith that otherwise might evaporate in sentimentality and pietism or be exhausted wholly in a selfish individual salvation. And moreover it brings Christians who live privileged and protected lives face to face with the appalling conditions and facts of our social problem. It ought to arouse and sensitise the common Christian conscience to the demands of social righteousness and justice as well as to the need of social service.

All this is well and good, it is beyond praise as I have said. And yet there are palpable defects and perils in the work of the institutional Church, both for the ordinary Christian and especially for the minister who devotes himself to such work. It is a strange and yet evident fact that those who devote themselves to social service are often indifferent to the deeper claims of social justice. "They can not see the forest for the trees." The pressing and immediate needs hide the larger aspects of the social question. They are so absorbed in the relief of symptoms that they have not time or mind for

the consideration of causes. They are moved by immediate pity and not by the larger, deeper passion for righteousness.

And for the minister, the parish house sometimes crowds the pulpit and the altar into a corner. He is apt to neglect the dynamics of his vocation for its mechanics. He leaves prayer and the Word of God to serve tables. He deserts his highest functions of teaching, preaching and worship, for the details of executive and administrative work. The mechanical crowds out the inspirational. One of our wise and witty bishops called a certain institutional Church "the Church of the Holy Fuss." Many such a parish might be called "the Church of the Sacred Wheels." For it begins by running on wheels and then runs wheels and finally runs to wheels altogether. And "the spirit" is not always "in the wheels" as it was in the prophet's vision.

The essential function of the Christian ministry, in this as in all other fields, is inspirational, not mechanical. "The Word of God and prayer," preaching, teaching and worship, these constitute the legitimate and paramount vocation of the minister.

How can the Christian minister deal with the social interpretation and application of the gospel in this his highest field and function?

1. He can preach that straight and strong social message and that social gospel which were, in part at least, the original message and gospel of Christ Himself.

The Sunday evening service, the despair of the average rector, offers a good opportunity for such an experiment. If the preacher still holds fast to the traditional interpretation of religion, the morning service will suffice for preaching the conventional gospel to the conventional Christians who ordinarily attend that service. Let the preacher then deliver his purely "religious" message which carefully distinguishes, after the orthodox manner, between the "sacred" and the "secular," even his "denatured" gospel of metaphysical theologies and creeds, whose object is the eschatological salvation of the individual soul, whether by the material magic of rites and sacraments or the formal magic of "plans of salvation," "schemes of redemption" or stereotyped conversion. But in the evenings let him try the experiment of a return to the original and simple message of Jesus with its emphasis upon righteousness, personal and social, brotherly love and human service. Let him deal plainly and fearlessly with the great principles of justice and mercy that underlie and permeate all the great social questions and problems of the day. Let him take for his theme Jesus' central vision "the Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of Heaven," on earth. And I have no doubt of the results. If such preaching be sane and searching and true to the original gospel, it will win back many of the masses who have deserted the Church because the Church seems to have deserted them and religion alike; it will make the gospel real to many

others to whom it had become, in its conventional presentation, as meaningless as the disputations of the mediæval scholastics who debated such questions as "how many angels can stand on the point of a cambric needle."

But two or three warnings ought to be given as to the preaching of the social gospel.

Let the preacher never attempt to handle any subject which he has not thoroughly studied in all its aspects. Half-baked enthusiasts, half-informed and often mis-informed as to that half of the subject with which they think themselves familiar, gifted with much zeal but possessed of little knowledge,— such preachers of the social gospel work incalculable harm to the cause they have at heart, bring reproach on the social gospel itself and repel and disgust their intelligent hearers. They drive them either back to the traditional, conventional and outworn conceptions of religion or away from religion altogether.

The most thorough, laborious and complete preparation is absolutely necessary to him who would preach the social gospel effectively. Every young man who is looking forward to the ministry to-day should take, in college and university, the most complete and thorough courses possible in sociology and economics. Especially should he study the latter subject under the younger teachers who are breaking away from the effete orthodox positions which made economics the "dismal science," as fixed and fated and devoid of human or moral in-

terest as pure mathematics. The new and prophetic economists are presenting their subject more and more as shot through and through with human and moral interests, as concerned not only with things, their production, consumption and distribution, but with human lives and the living of them, ay, as a practical science out of which may be developed the art of a reasonable, rational and equitable society. Economics and sociology, in the best teaching of both, are merging into each other to-day. And every candidate for the ministry ought to have the best possible courses in both in his college preparation and also, if possible, in his seminary training. He ought to keep up his reading and study after leaving the college and seminary. Let him send to some expert in these sciences, who has the moral and Christian point of view, for a list of the best books and let him master those books. Let all his preaching be based on the widest and deepest possible knowledge of his subjects in all their aspects.

And then let him acquire by original investigation and personal acquaintance some knowledge of the facts as they surround him on every side. Let him take some part in the work of the associated charities in his community that he may know the causes and conditions of poverty about him. Let him join some labour union that he may get labour's point of view for industry. He can get the capitalist's or employer's point of view readily and fully enough from his vestry or the pew renters in the middle aisle or

from the books of the orthodox economists or from the literature freely published and circulated by any of the trusts and corporations. Only as thus fully equipped dare he venture into this field. Let him know thoroughly his ground before he attempts to preach the social gospel.

And as a last warning to the preacher of the social gospel, I would repeat what I have already said, beware of hasty and unwarranted "personalisations" in your message. Don't be in a hurry to pick out certain "wealthy malefactors" and make them the sole objects of your fulminations. There may be occasions when you must pour out the lava of your righteous indignation upon certain groups or even individuals, as Jesus did upon the Scribes and Pharisees. If that burden of the Lord is laid upon you, may you have grace to deliver it as fearlessly as He did and take the consequences without complaining or posing as a martyr, even as He took the consequences of His preaching. But those occasions are rare indeed. Most of our social wrongs and even sins, as I have said before, inhere in the economic, industrial and social system rather than in individuals, and the rich are often as much victims of that system as the poor. The captains of industry are as often under the inexorable pressure of economic necessity as the labourers. Let the preacher attack the evil of the situation as boldly as he will, but let him beware of too hastily fixing the whole responsibility of it upon persons who may be,

at most, guilty only of connivance or non-resistance, and are therefore only "participes criminis."

So much for the preaching of the social gospel from the pulpit. But the minister may be and should be a teacher as well as a preacher. He can and ought to spread the knowledge of the social problem and the applications of the Gospel thereto.

Let him see that the best books on these subjects are in his parish library or the public library and let him stimulate the interest of his parishioners in such literature and possibly guide their reading. Let him form circles for the study of such problems. The prayer-meeting or the mid-week evening service might well be turned, after worship, into such a class for the study of social problems and the relation of religion thereto. Let him direct the attention and investigations of his men's club to the closest and most pressing of such problems in the community and municipality. Let him encourage his people, particularly his young, zealous and enthusiastic confirmées and communicants, to take up such work,— say, for example, in the charity-organisation society,— as will put them face to face with social facts and conditions and stimulate them to inquiry as to the relation of the gospel thereto. In all these ways we can quicken the social conscience in our people and spread the social gospel among them.

But the most direct and best means of approach to the social problem now open to the Church, as it

seems to me, is offered in what is popularly known as the forum, that is, an open meeting, held in the Church or parish house, generally on a Sunday evening, in which various phases of our social problems are presented by selected speakers, representing all schools of thought, conservative and radical, champions of various methods and movements of social reform and reconstruction; and then the meeting is thrown open for questions and discussion from the floor. The forum requires most skillful and wise management. It needs a presiding officer who is at once firm, impartial and quick in his decisions, alert and keen to discern the motive and meaning of questions, apt in putting that meaning to the audience and also tactful and considerate in handling trouble-makers, intentional or blundering. But given such management and such leadership, I know of no better and more effective way in which the Church can deal with the social problem.

In the first place it benefits the Church, often benefits it quite incalculably. It puts the average conservative Church member into some touch with what is being thought and felt in the great common mind and heart of the people along the lines of our social, economic and industrial conditions. And the average conservative church member is generally more woful and utterly ignorant in such matters than almost any other member of the community. It evokes a new sympathy in the heart of the Church with the interest and purpose of most of the social

movements of the time. She begins to discern that the blindest, bitterest, most blundering and apparently most materialistic and anti-religious of these movements is often a groping and yearning after the commanding vision, the paramount ideal which Christ set before His Church, namely the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Her own vision grows clearer and broader, her sympathies are widened, her heart is enlarged and her hope and courage are strengthened. She is put into closer touch with the best spirit of the times. And she finds that the world about her is really longing in its inmost heart for the consummation of the most essential purpose and aim of her own existence and mission. That consciousness gives new definiteness to her faith, new outlet for her energies and new opportunities for her service. And when the Church does manifest such active and vital sympathy with the best aspirations of the popular mind and heart, she will, I believe, attract to the ranks of her army many new and earnest recruits. Many are waiting for "the banner of the Kingdom" to be uplifted before their eyes, waiting to understand the real purpose and aim of the Church as Christ conceived them. When they do catch that vision, they will be ready to follow her leadership.

And then the Church can incalculably serve the social movements of the day and the common mind and heart from which they spring. She can broaden, mellow, co-ordinate these movements and at the same

time inspire them with what they need most of all, the religious motive and the Christian spirit. She can give them what they lack and want, a religious interpretation.

Movements and groups like those of the Single Taxers, the Socialists, the Philosophic Anarchists, and even the conservative opportunitists, etc., are apt, when isolated and shut in upon themselves, to grow narrow, bitter, bigotted and intolerant. Each demands its own shibboleth and can not conceive that any one can possibly be interested in social justice or belong to the "army of the common good" who does not accept and repeat that shibboleth. Each proclaims its own panacea and will not admit that there is any other possible plan or means of reconstructing society on right lines, building up the Kingdom of God on earth or even ameliorating our present intolerable wrongs and injustices.

As I have already said, each group resembles very closely the old evangelical party in the Church. It has its own very definite "plan of salvation" or "scheme of redemption" for society and society can never be saved except in just their way. And nobody can lay claim to any interest in social salvation who does not assent to their peculiar confession of faith and swallow whole their "social theology." Consequently the various groups misunderstand each other. They do not discern their common aim and purpose. They become utterly sectarian and fight each other instead of fighting, as divisions and

brigades of the one army of social justice and righteousness against the common enemy. Their doctrines, unmodified by each other's views and interpretations of the common facts, constantly grow narrower, more irrational and unreasonable.

What all these movements need is a common platform where they can face each other, talk their hearts and heads clean out, discuss their agreements and disagreements, test the validity of their variant views, point out the fallacies and weaknesses of each other's doctrines, acknowledge each other's strengths and values, and above all discern the unity of their aims and ideas and so develop their sympathies.

And what institution, what organisation can furnish such a common platform except the Christian Church? She occupies the very center of the whole stage and arena, if she only understand herself and her mission aright. Her central aim and vision are the very essential and paramount aim and vision of all these movements, the setting up of "the Kingdom of God on earth." And while committing herself to none of their variant policies and programmes, she can hold that common aim and vision high and steady before them all and gather them about that standard as a center of unity and loyalty.

The Church has very evidently rendered this invaluable service to the social movements and parties of the day, where she has tried this experiment long enough to develop her own experience and skill and also to secure anything like effective results. In

the newer forums, the atmosphere of the meetings is often surcharged with antagonism and misunderstanding. The spirit of the meeting is turbulent and difficult of regulation and control. The questions are generally captious, designed to heckle the speaker and to present often unreasonable and unrelated matters or just to exhibit the questioner's shibboleth and nostrum, rather than to seek information, clear difficulties, offer valid objections or discern agreements. Our socialist brethren are apt to be particularly disagreeable, captious and antagonistic in their questions and attitude in such new forums. There is a stage of great difficulty in starting this experiment. It requires infinite patience, tactfulness, skill and firmness to get through this first stage. But in the older forums, like those of Ford Hall, Boston, or Calvary Church, Buffalo, the change is most marked. The atmosphere is genial and sympathetic, and the spirit, for the most part, fine. The questions are generally honest and earnest. And there is apparent a widely prevalent consciousness of unity of aims and purposes among all parties.

This is, in itself, an invaluable service which the Church may render to the mutually exclusive and often intolerant social movements of the day. They become bigotted and sectarian when isolated. They often become mutually tolerant, sympathetic and catholic-minded when brought together on that broad common platform which is the Church's peculiar

province and possession, the platform of the "kingdom of heaven on earth."

But the best and deepest service the Church can render the various social movements of the day, and a service for which the forum offers a peculiar opportunity, is this: She can if she will, give a religious interpretation to these movements, reveal to them the inherently religious character of their essential aim and ideal, motive them with the religious motive, inspire them with the religious spirit, give them a faith and a God. If the Church can do that, she will render the profoundest and most invaluable service possible. For she will not only sanify and sweeten the temper and mind of these movements, broaden their outlook, enlarge their sympathies and make more reasonable and tolerant their thinking and feeling, but she will also immensely deepen and intensify, as well as purify their zeal and devotion. She can consecrate and hallow these movements, if she will. She can make them, in the best sense, a religion or better still an integral part of a broader and better religion. And most of these movements feel, though half-unconsciously, the need of such a religious consecration. Even Socialism in some quarters is beginning to realise the spiritual inadequacy of its favourite doctrine of "economic determinism," the purely materialistic interpretation which Karl Marx fastened upon it. It is growing dimly conscious of its essentially religious aspiration

and longing for some more spiritual interpretation. A group of socialist leaders who had been attending a forum in a Christian Church were, on a certain occasion, discussing their movement. They all felt a certain indefinable and serious defect and want in their common cause. At last one of them exclaimed "I will tell you what it is. We lack the religious motive, the religious interpretation, the religious spirit." And with him all the rest agreed. That was what one forum did for one group of social reformers. And it is what the Church may do and ought to do for all.

I can not see how the servant of his kind can keep up patiently and untiringly, even undespairingly, his ministry to the ungrateful, the unresponsive, the apparently worthless and hopeless, unless he feels throbbing through all his love of humanity God's infinite heart of eternal love. I can not see how the champion of economic justice and social righteousness can keep up bravely and unwaveringly his fight for the cause, unless he feels his battle only a part of God's everlasting warfare with all evil, backed up and guaranteed by the eternal Will of Righteousness.

All the great idealistic movements of the day, particularly all its movements for social righteousness, seem to me to be wearing on their very foreheads a sign "Wanted a hold on the things unseen and eternal, Wanted a faith, Wanted a God." And it is the supreme and paramount social mission and

function of the Church and her ministry to answer that need, to furnish that religious interpretation, motive and spirit, to give to these movements and their earnest and devoted but often spiritually blind and groping champions, what they most need and want, consciously or unconsciously.— A Faith and a God.

THE END

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